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PUBLISHED BY
MARTIN SECKER & WARBURG LTD.
FOR THE
CONGRESS FOR CULTURAL FREEDOM

AUGUST, 1954 VOL. III, NO. 2

Edited by STEPHEN SPENDER *and* IRVING KRISTOL

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ENCOUNTER is published monthly at Panton House, 25 Haymarket, London, S.W.1
2s. 6d. per number. Yearly subscription 34s. (U.S. $5.00) (India 12 rupees)

THE CONGRESS FOR CULTURAL FREEDOM
104 Boulevard Haussmann, Paris 8, France

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Lee Kok Liang

Return to Malaya

LAST night I had to give up my nocturnal rides. My bicycle had been stolen!

I stayed back home. As I paced slowly in the front hall, I cursed myself in a low voice, out of everyone's earshot, of course; for, if my uncles and sisters-in-law were to overhear my soft-spoken oaths, they would at once think I was going mad.

They expected curses to be loud and aimed at something external to the self. Only mad people, they would say, cursed themselves. Unfortunately I had acquired this self-cursing habit from my stay abroad. But I kept it hidden from them; it was no use trying to explain.

They could understand sighs: if a person sighed when alone, they would understand why he should be sighing. But this self-cursing habit of mine would be quite beyond them.

So I continued cursing myself in whispers. My shiny bicycle stolen! What a fool I was; I forgot that there were thieves around!

I had been pedalling the night before last through those slummy alleys, my bicycle rippling and clicking like a singing machine, when I heard voices of children from a side-alley. Out of curiosity I turned into the side-alley, and as I slowed down speed, riding grandly on free wheel, I saw clusters of children sitting beneath low shadowy porches. Many were naked or had just their pants on.

There were many children, hopping and clattering about on high wooden clogs, chasing one another in the alley: some ran along bare-footed. Then I saw groups of children playing cards (somehow they managed to read the cards in the filtering haze of the street-lamps). They looked serious and professional as they fanned out the cards in their hands. For some moments they were plunged in silence, except for a sniffle or two, and then they burst out in loud exclamations. Someone had won, of course.

I then noticed four long-haired boys squatting silently on their hunkers in a row by the edge of the gutter. I thought they were having a secret game, for their eyes were watchful and vivid. I swung my bicycle round to have a closer look at them.

They looked straight into the light of my headlamp without flinching: but their faces were puckered; and their arms akimbo were tightly pressed against the sides of their waists. They had about them the strained, concentrated look of craftsmen at work.

Suddenly they seized hold of some loose papers on the road, gave a few quick rubs to their bottoms, hitched up their shorts without buttoning up, and ran swiftly up the low stone steps and sat down with loud yells among their companions. They did not stop yelling although I had swung my bicycle the other way.

Leaving my bicycle leaning against a pillar—I didn't remember which, for there were so many pillars and they all looked alike—I walked over to them, as I was determined to find out if they had been insulting me, and, if so, with what favourite words.

I walked up to them and touched a clean-shaven head with my finger-tips. The boy mistook my gesture. He thought I was going to join in the card game—so he moved over, a sort of crab-like scampering, sliding his

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buttocks and heels at the same time. But I shook my head, and asked them a few questions which I put over in a very stern and reserved manner.

On learning that they had all the time been yelling about some misplaced cards—apparently they had more than fifty-two to a pack—I left them. However, I wasn't very convinced.

And then I found my bicycle gone!

I asked everyone: I walked from cluster to cluster, but the children shook their heads vigorously and continued with their card-game. I even stopped some cyclists on the road to find out if they were riding on my machine; some shook their fists at me as they rode away. I began stopping the pedestrians; they listened quietly for some time and then gave me preposterous advice, such as buying a new bicycle that very night. I then banged on five or six doors: the women came out and banged the door in my face again.

I returned to the long-haired boys and this time shouted and threatened. My voice was so full of anger: somehow I didn't care much for my bicycle when I shouted. I just wanted fair play, I felt. Theirs, on the other hand, were full of fun and mischief, and their answers were mocking and merciless. In a way, it was a hopeless contest. They had been used to losing so many things and this was my first loss.

So tonight I stayed indoors. I had closed the front door as I could not bear looking at those warm yellow street lights while being confined in the house.

But I hadn't counted on the children. They had poured into the street. And there were five of them sitting on my door-step, which had been vacant and was therefore theirs. I sat quietly behind the door so that I might pick up some accidental gossip about my bicycle.

Somehow their conversation cheered me up a bit, although I learnt nothing about my bicycle.

—I saw a rat to-day-lah

—A big fat rat with a long tail-lah

—Hic hic hic scampering and rushing about like a mad fox

—Oo-ee oo-ee oo-ee (a sharp whistle sounded)

—One two som, la-la-li-tum-bong

—And a fat man, very fat-lah, chased the rat with a tooth-brush

—I know-man, I know-man, he was brushing his teeth

—Chek, chek, chek (gurgles of laughter)

—He lost his spectacles-lah, Ai-ya! do you know what he looked like

—Like what

—Like a tortoise with goat's-dung eyes, chek, chek

—Ai-ya! yes-lah, and he lost them, the spectacles-lah

—One two som, la-la-li-tum-bong, I won!

They spoke in a sort of Hokkien Chinese (towns in Malaya are dominated by different Chinese dialects) with a few Malay and English expressions thrown in. Their conversation was not the lazy ding-dong dialogue. It was more of a ringing of voices than anything else; a sudden release of exultant feelings. Somehow they all wanted to talk at the same time and succeeded in doing so. Like starlings, twittering and wheeling in a mass, they filled the night with their high voices. Night-time was talking time for them.

THE night brought out other worlds too. Night falls swiftly in Malaya. The crisp, crystal-blue shadows of night spread over the sky like an ever-growing dot of ink on a blotter.

In the final burst of radiance of the dying day, as the orange-coloured clouds flared violently in the horizon, the white buildings and the trees and the fields and the crowds of people who strolled gently about in brilliant clothes seemed, all of them, like the silvered facets of tiny wavelets in a vast yet calm ocean.

The personality, no longer tormented by the clammy heat and masculine régime of the day, recovered its pristine suppleness, became richer and more mellow. Hidden desires, so cunningly secreted during the day, were covetously satisfied. The ambitions of the heart were acknowledged and carried out; even a businessman would take up his pen and write a long, sentimental letter to a friend.

Out in the street, I saw a Chinese servant trying to ride a bicycle. She had clambered up on the seat and was gripping the handle-bars tightly. She was nervous, uttering little cries, and she clung to the shadows of the street like a sailor clinging to the spars of a junk during a

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storm. She swayed and rolled and zigzagged across the street; she looked as if she were going to fall. But she managed in time to straighten out the bicycle. And she gave a soft happy laugh. A few more of such nights and she could sail on her own. What fun! A few more months of saving from her wages—about £8–9 per mensem—and she would be able to buy a third-hand bicycle. At least, there was the hope.

From the end of the street, a hawker cried out his wares in a thin quavering voice, and his cry was answered by the children who chased after him with shrill mewing voices as though they were a flock of gulls, gliding, sweeping, diving and riding on the air, behind a ship.

His small assistant walked ahead of the hawker. The boy kept on clacking the bamboo clapper as though he was trying to repair the engine-room with a hammer. This was kept up continuously. All the time they swept up and down the street: the hawker, swaying under a long pole from which two panniers hung, tipped with light, and bobbed crazily like buoys in a rough sea; his small assistant hammering on the clapper with a tired and patient look on his face.

It was, in a way, sad to think that they were a gradually vanishing tribe, or at least, a stagnant tribe. For numerous food-stalls, growing up along the roadside and pavements in the centre of the town, had offered the solitary hawker and his assistant, with their small means, very severe competition.

One drizzling night before I lost my bicycle I set out for one of those eating-places. Fine fluffy snowy drops of drizzle blew against my face; and in the tropics this was like having points of sunlight on one's face on a cold winter's morning, say, in London.

But when I got down, the unpleasant fetid exhalation of the wet, warm road pricked my nostrils. How the smells won't let my nose alone! As I walked closer to the eating-stalls, I had less and less of a choice of odours. The smells were so terribly and intricately mixed; the good and bad smells became almost indistinguishable. Sometimes when I thought I was smelling the sweet, disturbing smell of eau-de-cologne upon lifting my nose higher I found that I was inhaling intolerable quantities of human odour which carried with it, like a wave dragging along minute grains of sand in its rush up the beach, traces of the musty smell of dry dust, of salty sweat, of tingling sulphuric spices, and of foul petrol and oil and powder.

The crowds were so thick that I could not get a chair. It was almost impossible to move freely in these surroundings: I had to sit down as quickly as possible.

Around me were the rough wooden tables, midget stools, four-wheeled stalls with zinc roofs, long and low like those of the quayside sheds, and tiers of meat-balls, fish, noodles, red chillies, neatly stacked in pyramids, and storm-lamps and oil-burners in cylindrical frames which flashed out like beacons—all these transformed the alley into a busy night-harbour as the lights glinted and slithered across the wet, glossy surface of the road.

The crowds grew thicker and thicker. Soon faces became lacquered with layers of sweat. Handkerchiefs were in constant use. I shouted several times; the waiters ignored me; all the more so, as there was a half-finished bowl on the table I had grabbed, leftovers from the previous diner. So I sat and watched.

I noticed several family groups; they possessed the peculiar manner of eating in a family way: the young ones lifting their chop-sticks with identical inclinations; besides, the sons usually had their mother's round face and their father's glowing snub nose.

Further along, among the better tables, sat the wealthy, in clean white drill shirts and trousers, distinguished from the rabble by, perhaps, the possession of second wives (called *t'sips*), and dark powerful automobiles which were parked on the road like the stout supports of pontoon bridges.

Their second wives were usually much prettier, though not as reproductive as their first ones. They sucked iced-coffee carefully through straws; the tumblers were soon drained dry, leaving fat chunks of ice on the bottom. Mouths were delicately rounded to receive bales of noodles, their hands, with elbows resting on the table-tops, working ceaselessly like cranes. And when they had finished, they licked their lips softly and looked at their masters.

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In nearby coffee-shops, the ceiling fans whirred continuously, sending cool sprays of air downwards. The night-flies attacked and attacked again the bright lamps. Some crawled on the white clay lampshades.

Somewhere, not far away from me, the usual willowy dark-brown women sat, already attractively got up in their cheong-sum, their hair permed and patted down with oil, while their eyes, liquid with a calculating shine, were set like jewels in their round powder-puff faces.

A number of men had fixed their gazes upon these women. A subterranean flow of comments came from the men. The sloe-eyed women pretended innocence; but as one turned round to talk to her companions, she cast a swift, gathering glance at the men. She fanned herself briskly; taking out her handkerchief, she slowly dabbed her cheeks and leant back slightly.

Suddenly, striding down the alley, a belated theatrical figure made his appearance: tall, fearsome, high in the nose, with stormy sun-set complexion, wearing a bow-tie and flowing nylon shirt: and, without turning his head, bore himself like a dreadnought through the crowds as though he had a mission to fulfil, or as if, a neighbour commented, he were hunting for the lavatory. In other words, an Englishman had walked by.

A FEW days ago I travelled inland. It was on a hot burning afternoon.

As our bus passed an army camp, a woman, sitting behind me, said to her daughter: "Look at them, those soldiers, playing football in the hot sun! How foolish!"

"They've got such hairy legs," her daughter replied.

"Don't say that," her mother snapped, "I never asked you to look at their legs."

We went through miles and miles of rubber plantations which lined the main highway—green leaves with slender albino trunks arranged evenly like tufts on a hairbrush. Roadside villages came into sight. The plain wooden shacks were crammed with cheap goods and half-asleep semi-naked occupants.

We passed those New Villages which were as attractively planned as a poultry farm with their new zinc roofs and rows of bare wooden walls behind a high barbed-wire fence. Sometimes, planted on a roadside, we saw a huge blackboard with thin neat white letters painted on it in a schoolmaster's hand, proclaiming the place to be a WHITE AREA in three languages—the area was safe from the troublesome "bandits" and trigger-happy boys. A slate-grey buffalo was patiently munching the grass below the board.

We had to pick up some passengers. The bus stopped by the side of a canal while we waited for a passenger who was still packing her clothes on the other side. The conductor had scrambled across a narrow bridge and was urging her on in a loud voice.

A few Malay boys were diving off from the banks into the yellowish canal. Their bodies shone like polished rosewood. Their eyes were velvety and dark and their hair hung dripping-wet over their brown foreheads; their features well-proportioned and smooth; now and then they raised their arms with swan-like grace and plunged neatly into the canal.

Some Malay women were walking along the path beside the canal. They were wearing many-coloured sarongs and shawls. The file moved along slowly and stately: some had rattan baskets balanced on their heads, some carried naked babies in their arms.

A young woman raised her face and laughed as her baby tried to clutch her breast in the folds of her garment; her expression was dreamy in the sunlight. She then adjusted her sarong and offered her breast to her baby as she walked along.

They crossed a log-bridge, balancing nimbly on its round surface, and made for a group of huts among the coco-nut trees and rain-trees. The thatched attap-houses or huts looked as shaggy as a bear; but they had some graceful and sharp lines about the roofs. Just outside one of these huts, I saw a gleaming, highly powered car standing beneath a thatched covering which was supported by four bamboo poles. Someone living there had constructed this garage for his car. There were so many stories about gadgets and the Malay peasant who had recently benefited by the favourable prices for his crop. One was about a peasant who had brought a refrigerator to his hut which was

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unblessed with electricity, thinking it was a combination of a wardrobe and a wireless-set. At least he had the inventive mind of a specialist; what he lacked were the tools and knowledge!

The bus took me to a small town.

Nothing seemed much changed. Only the old bridge was being pulled down, and a new million-dollar bridge, the talk and grumble of the town, was going up very slowly. A number of local hooligans had won the Government Social Welfare sweepstake. (How they all have the luck! But soon, you'll see, they would spend every cent they had won, a wrinkled old woman grimly forecasted, nodding her head at me.) Western democracy was beginning to seep through the town in brightly coloured posters and banners carrying such a message as WE WELCOME YOU, YOUR EXCELLENCY.

The bus stopped in the middle of the market square. I got off in the glaring sunlight.

The first person I saw was Ai Chye, meaning "short fellow" in Cantonese.

He was sitting on top of a box with his wares around him. A large bamboo-plaited hat with a sharp apex covered his head. He had protruding gold-fish eyes. They were weak, he apologised for not seeing me—because for some years he had to get up at three in the morning to prepare the soft bean-curds for the market, and he had to do his work in bad light. He smiled a lot when he talked. He sold everything, he waved his hand round and said—salt-fish, ground-nut oil, lard, vegetables, baskets, fresh fish, soya sauce, chilli, cinnamon, butter, and margarine. But he had to pack up by 2 in the afternoon as the market closed at that time. Then he went round the town trying to sell illegal lottery tickets, called 1,000 and 10,000 characters, which had been raging clandestinely among the adult population. At night he spread out his book-stall; rows of books stacked on a canvas by the side of a road; and he sold cheap Chinese love stories, serious Chinese classics, semi-pornographic periodicals, American comics, and surprising translations of *Nana* and *La Dame aux Camélias*.

As I left the market, two lorries, piled high with sacks of rice, trundled along the highway towards me, ploughing up clouds of red dust.

A dark-green military truck crawled warily behind. Sullen-eyed Home Guard boys stood erect in the open back of the truck—like green bottles stacked in the case. Their faces were as wooden as masks; they hardly talked; they seldom changed their positions; and they wore their berets very low over the forehead in a straight line.

Walking over the old bridge, I came to the main street. I called on two old friends.

The wife, plump, with round piggy cheeks and a nose like a sparrow's beak, was sitting on a chair, her legs drawn up sideways, when I entered. As she saw me, she gave out a loud yell, and hastily stood up, wrapping her sarong tight round her chest. She asked me a lot of questions. Did she look much fatter? Had I noticed that her hair was now thicker? She was not so bald now, was she? Did I bring her some marvellous hair restorer? When was I getting married?

She fanned herself briskly while talking, and she studied me carefully with her small nimble eyes. Then her husband came out, tall and bony, puffing a cigar. He bent swiftly over and blew a cloud of smoke on her head. "My cure for her baldness," he said. His wife burst out laughing and hollered, "Now, you can see why I have grown fat. He makes me laugh all the time."

A few more desultory remarks and I left them.

The green chicks with huge Chinese characters in faded yellow were lowered over the front of the coffee-shop. The shop was almost empty. White marble table-tops seemed to float in the darkened interior like many round pieces of ice-floes. Almost the same as before.

The proprietress sat on a stool behind the wooden counter, her big head snuggled in her arms; as I entered, she raised her head, moving her massive body lazily, and stared at me. She dozed off again when I walked past her.

Her husband sat on a high-back chair, his left leg clamped hard on the edge. He fondled his long straggly dark beard, rolling the ends round his little finger, meditatively. He had a bony face, and from his sunken lacquered eye-pits his hard eyes gazed hypnotically into the afternoon glare; his nose curved harshly above his

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fleshy lips. He saw me. Quickly he rose up, all smiles, and striding over to his wife, shook her and pointed to me. She nodded at me weakly. Softly he asked me: "Going to see your grand-aunties? Good." I nodded my head. He smiled. As I walked into the house, he had returned to his chair and clamped his leg on the edge of the chair, brooding silently over his dwindling business.

It was darker still in the hall; the atmosphere was moist and heavy. From the enclosed air-well a pale weak light floated slowly downwards as though it had to penetrate several fathoms of water. I just could make out the shadowy form of the high altar at the back of the hall. A faded picture of the Goddess of Mercy hung above the joss-pots.

My first grand-aunty sat on a low mahogany bench. She was a shapeless bundle in the dark. She turned round and saw me. Then her greeting reached me like an echo, distant and reverberating.

My second grand-aunty had walked in swiftly from the back of the house, hurrying along a small child with shrill commands. She had grown very thin; the bones stuck out in her face; her small grey bun was held by a large hair-pin. She wore a sombre-coloured sarong and her thin arms were covered by a long-sleeved blouse. The child began playing on the brick floor, picking things up and nibbling them. She kept on addressing the child; scolded him frequently and laughed so faintly that at first I thought she was weeping. She kept her eyes from me.

I then sat down beside my first grand-aunty who in a low quavering voice asked me: "When did you come back?"

She paused and wiped her mouth. "Do you know that your grand-uncle has gone deaf?" she continued, "You'll have to shout when you want to talk to him: he can't hear. Sometimes he can hear very well. I think he's like a wireless-set; he depends so much on good weather. He hears very badly when it rains. Now, remember, you must open your mouth slowly; for he has to watch your mouth when you talk to him." She scratched her head slowly with her hand. Her face was as yellow and wrinkled as a sponge.

Suddenly my second grand-aunty spoke to me: "Look at him"—pointing to her grandchild—"he's very disobedient. He crawls about everywhere like a worm. He won't listen to my scoldings. When he wants anything he must have it. So naughty! He's getting worse and worse. I think he wants to ride a bicycle. Yesterday he bit the pedals with his four teeth. So naughty." And she laughed nervously.

My first grand-aunty pulled me by the arm: "Look! here's your grand-uncle. I don't know if he can recognise you. I do hope he doesn't. You'd better shout out at him. Remember, open your mouth slowly. Here he is." She waved her hand and shouted "Hoi, there. Do you know who this is? Can you hear me? Hoi, there, wireless-set!"

My grand-uncle walked up to me, his plump monkish face expanding into a smile, and asked me, without answering his wife: "When did you come back?"

"It's a great pity he recognised you at once. Usually he takes a longer time," my first grand-aunty whispered disappointedly. "Sometimes I am not sure if he's deaf. He's like a small boy, always playing tricks on me."

She turned to her sister and said: "Stop watching the child! You'll frighten him before he grows up. Go and get my cheroots from the box. Ai-ya!" she sighed, pulling me by the arm, "the price of cheroots has gone up again."

A WOODEN sampan carried me across the river. As it drew up against the wooden quay, I threw down ten cents to the rower and hastily clambered up the wooden steps. A few women were bathing, pouring down buckets of water over their sarong-soaked bodies. They were plump and amiable. Under a low-spreading rain-tree, three youths in crumpled muddy-white dress stood idly gossiping. Beside the tree was a low hut. I looked into it.

In the middle of the floor there were three tables, each higher than the other, arranged in the shape of a high altar. Small tea-cups lay on the top table which had on either side two earthen joss-pots. A worn mouldy cloth, embroidered with the designs of a dragon, was flung on the lowest table. Around the sides of the hut were long strips of magic paper.

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From the poles of the roof numbers of red papers with gold letterings dangled, flapping loosely in the breeze. Straggly trails of white joss-smoke rose up towards the ceiling. Everything else was grey. Some one must have been praying this afternoon. Perhaps for luck in the 10,000 character lottery. Dreams of huge fortunes amassed suddenly! They had such trust in miracles and luck!

I followed a small lane which skirted the crumbling walls of the village huts and led diagonally across the bare, hard-baked squares, where naked children and mangy dogs slept in the hot sun. A slimy glacial waste, viscous greenish surface with boils, lay inert in a wide dug-out.

The hut stood to the left. On the lintel of the door, I saw another red piece of paper with gold writings. Otherwise, the front of the hut was bare.

I could not see clearly when I entered, as there were no front windows. I walked into the back of the house.

In the next partition I saw a naked baby sound asleep in a rattan cradle which was attached by means of four rough cords to the poles of the ceiling. There was a raised wooden bed beside it. A yellow mat lay on top of the bed.

Still I could not find her. So I strode into the small airless kitchen at the back.

She was sitting on a stool, her arms hugging a huge earthen jar in the corner. Her torn sarong was wrapped round her body under her armpits. She did not see me.

In front of her, about five feet away, was a slight depression on the mud-floor. A puddle glinted in its corner like an evil eye. A tiny shallow drain led the water away but the egress was blocked up with rubbish and cans. She was staring at the piles of clothes and dishes lying beside the puddle. Her son, a slim young boy with finely cut features and pale transparent complexion, saw me and started towards me, crying out: "Why, when did you come back?"

The woman then turned round. I smiled at her, expecting that she would let loose a torrent of words and jokes, for she had a witty and ironic tongue. Instead she glanced at me for a while and then fixed her gaze upon the puddle again.

Her son made a signal with his hand; and then coming close to me he whispered: "My mother cannot talk very much now." "Why," I asked. "I don't know exactly: but for some months she could not move her legs at all. She's much better now; she can say a few words at a time."

"Why didn't you get a doctor?"

"Ai-ya! Doctors are very expensive, you know."

Slowly with great difficulty, the woman moved her lips. "Why can't I talk? Tell me. Why . . . can't . . . I talk now?"

"But, mother," her son answered quickly, "you're much better now."

"Why can't I talk? Why can't . . ." She got up from the stool and walked off.

"But mother, you're talking. See, you are talking."

I talked softly to the boy. As we left the kitchen, I saw her sitting on the bed, her legs crossed before her. Her lips were firm and she held her body erect. Her small hands lay on her lap: her eyes were wide-open and red with checked tears. The baby was still sound asleep. Suddenly she gave a sigh.

"Don't worry, you'll soon get well," I said. I walked out swiftly. The red piece of paper was flapping gently in the breeze.

As I rode across the waters, I heard the voices of the children, screaming and laughing on the banks. They must have been born with lusty lungs.

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Leslie A. Fiedler

McCarthy

RECENTLY a major wire service carried the story of a man, released from prison after more than fifty years, who confessed to never having heard of Joe McCarthy. For the unlucky rest of us, McCarthy and McCarthyism—the proper noun and the common one—are familiar to excess. The man has become a legend, and the legend a man.

Even to himself, McCarthy is apparently a mythical figure. His way of referring to his official self in the third person is well known; and there appears to be a real difference between "McCarthy," the public presence, humourless and vindictive, and "Joe," the private person who jokes and sets up the drinks. Being his own legend has indeed become a full-time job, so that the real Joe comes to have less and less leisure to exist. Somewhere along the line he found a moment to marry Jean Carr, who had been his assistant, but he has never managed to unpack his wedding presents; and one sees him camped among the unopened boxes, his palsied head trembling, his throat plagued with streptococci, as if his body and his voice were rebelling against the role into which they are forced. The man has become as vividly unreal as a political slogan.

His unreality is an essential attribute. Our age is a time for nightmares and the need to project them. The Communist Menace, which for years remained a journalistic luxury, a Hallowe'en false-face for bored chauvinists, comes to resemble more and more the bad dream from which we cannot awaken, the bad dream of history. Those who believe, on the one hand, that everyone who challenges middle-class orthodoxy is a lackey of Russia, or on the other, that anti-Communists are incipient fascists, have long been trying to make their stereotypes flesh. They have evoked McCarthy; the rest of us merely suffer him. But for all of us, he comes into existence at the same moment, some time just after 8 p.m. on the night of February 9th, 1950.

FROM the moment he rose before the Women's Republican Club of Wheeling, West Virginia, to announce that he had the names of 205 Communists in the State Department, McCarthy's history has been in the public domain. What most people know of his earlier career in the Senate: his opposition to sugar rationing and public housing; his leading, though unofficial, role in saving from their death-sentences German storm troopers convicted of shooting down 250 American and Belgian prisoners at Malmédy in 1944—all this has been reinterpreted in the light of the unbroken series of charges and counter-charges that have followed the Wheeling Lincoln's Day Address.

McCarthy on the one side; the State Department, the Democratic Party, the internationalist Republicans on the other; a threatened America between—this is our modern "East Lynne," a melodrama played over and over with an almost mindless persistence and lack of variation, in the newspapers, over the radio, on television. But who is the hero, who the villain? Sitting in the same playhouse, two audiences see two quite different plays acted simultaneously by the same cast.

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From the very first, the tone was set, half-comic, half-terrifying: the attack without warning, wild, self-contradictory, almost random; and never well documented or well prepared really, merely better prepared *for*: the press conference that announces another press conference at which the hyperbolic accusation is launched in a conspiratorial setting, as McCarthy raps a pencil against the mouthpiece of his telephone, turns on the water in the sink —he is surrounded by enemy dictaphones, he gives us to understand, spied on and harried. No matter how often the performance is repeated, the air of improvisation is never lost, the sense of one who rides the tiger, driven endlessly to defend and justify the indefensible first statement by an indefensible second, the indefensible second by a shameless diversion: "a list of 205 known to the Secretary of State as being members of the Communist Party . . . still working and shaping policy. . . ." "I do not believe I mentioned the figure 205. I believe I said 'over 200 . . .'." "I told him three times. I read the speech to him. I told him there were 57 Communists in the State Department. . . ."

We hesitate between laughter and exasperation until we realise that some are neither annoyed nor amused, that our buffoon and villain is someone else's hero, and certainly his own. Against those who harass him, he strikes out with a holy rage possible only to one convinced he is justified. Indeed, he is at his most ferocious against those relative outsiders who merely enter demurrers; General Marshall, because of a remark in favour of Ambassador Philip C. Jessup, became the victim of a 60,000-word attack on the floor of the Senate, later transformed into a book; Senator Tydings, chairman of the committee whose investigation of the Wheeling charges ended in a moral indictment of McCarthy, was stalked and slandered and defeated at the polls; and Secretary of the Army Stevens had to fight a series of brutal engagements after a rather modest protest over McCarthy's publicity on supposed Communist infiltration of the Army Signal Corps. Finally, President Eisenhower himself, for siding with Stevens, has become a target of abuse. Against opponents whom even he could not publicly call Communists, McCarthy displays his notorious willingness to edit stubbornly unrevealing facts to elicit hidden "truths": a composite photograph of Tydings and Earl Browder, or a picture of Secretary Stevens and McCarthy's former assistant, David Schine, made more intimate by a discreet use of the scissors—these appear to McCarthy legitimate enough weapons to use against an enemy who, he gives one to believe, is ultimately backed by the Soviet Secret Police. The process begun at a venture becomes institutionalised and self-perpetuating, like the Russian treason trials, and can only end with universal capitulation or universal accusation.

MANY people have deplored what they consider the excessive attention paid to McCarthy by the American press. But McCarthy apparently does more to sell newspapers than newspapers do to sell McCarthy. In an annual poll of political reporters in Washington, McCarthy has more than once been voted the worst of the forty-eight Senators by those who do most to spread his name and fame. Between McCarthy and the press in general, there is a state of chronic feud, which erupts from time to time into particular squabbles with editors like William Evjue, Henry Luce, and James Wechsler, columnists like Drew Pearson, and radio commentators like Edward R. Murrow; and yet he has, so far as publicity goes, the best press in the country. The very reporters who, as men, despise him, as reporters recognise in him the newsman's blessing: the story that writes itself. His statements do not have to be touched up or toned down to make good journalistic fare; McCarthy must have babbled in headlines as precociously as certain poets are said to have lisped in numbers. His press releases have to begin with that swollen, emotion-ridden air, that immunity to documentation, of the journalistic statement at its lowest level; and his heroic legend has been dreamed by the kind of mind to which the tabloid press habitually condescends.

But McCarthy is not his only press agent; he has also the Communist Party and some liberals, who by a simple act of inversion turn his own hyperpatriotic image into one of *their*

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stereotypes; and this in turn is adapted by vague anti-capitalists all over the world, who borrow whatever "facts" are useful to deprecate America. These people assume (and would like to believe) that because McCarthy bellows against Communist infiltration, this is sufficient proof that the whole idea is absurd. Like McCarthy, though for different political reasons, they are uninterested in an assessment of the truth, and prefer to keep the whole business in the realm of political mythology.

The Tydings Committee's investigation of McCarthy's original charges is a case in point. A mere glance at the documents makes clear how shifty and unreliable a witness McCarthy was, uneasily dodging from number to number, completely contemptuous of dates, and unwilling, despite boasts to the contrary, to strip himself of Senatorial immunity and take the legal consequences of his statements. But any approximately objective study of the relevant documents reveals that the investigation itself was partisan and inefficient, a mere token glance at the questions raised, and that its official report misrepresents what the Committee did, or rather failed to do. From its title page on, the Tydings report is dubious, for it claims to be a report of a whole Committee to which it was never submitted, as indeed it was not even submitted before release to the minority (Republican) members of the subcommittee actually involved. Moreover, the findings of the Tydings Committee have been falsified in discussion ever since, as they are, for instance, in a recent (and generally useful) issue of the *Progressive* devoted wholly to McCarthy, where Senator Lodge is quoted as having said that the investigations found no Communists in the State Department, but his qualification, that most of the case-material was insufficiently followed up to prove anything either way, is misleadingly omitted.

The case of Owen Lattimore and the Institute of Pacific Relations, in their relation to State Department policy, is another instance. This case, which was the first major pitched battle between McCarthy and the liberals, was a liberal disaster. Not that McCarthy was proved right—he wasn't. But the liberals were proved wrong, and have been on the defensive ever since. McCarthy did almost succeed in obscuring the facts of the Lattimore case in his attempts to re-make a waspish, party-line professor, with considerable influence among State Department policy-makers, into a "top espionage agent." But those who sprang so quickly to Lattimore's defence on the simple grounds that, being accused by McCarthy, he *must* be blameless (this might be called the theory of "innocence by association") had to writhe with him as he tried, before the McCarran Committee, to explain in what sense he thought the Moscow Trials a higher form of justice, or why, after he had authoritatively informed the American ambassador in Moscow that Outer Mongolia was a state completely independent of Russia, he applied for a travel visa to that country at the Russian Foreign Office.

To write off the whole desire to learn of the role of Communist influence in shaping American policy in China as a bugaboo scared up by the "China Lobby" is as facile and wrong as interpreting that policy as the fabrication of disloyal or suborned officials. The notion of the Chinese Communists as "agrarian reformers" was merely a particular development of a general liberal willingness to see the better side of Communism even where it did not exist. To label that impulse harmless is to the advantage only of the Communists; to indict it as utterly treacherous is only to McCarthy's advantage; but to see it in all its ambiguity is to the advantage of those whose first allegiance is to the truth.

We must, I am convinced, see this ambiguity or become its victims. I do not mean, of course, that we must moderate our fight against McCarthyism in an excess of scrupulosity; merely that we must understand what it is that we are fighting, so we do not waste our energy in stalking the enemy where he is not. It is better, I am sure, to fight windmills than not to fight; but where there are real monsters it is a pity to waste one's blows on windmills. Even the rallying cry which seems superficially most sound, the contention that McCarthyism has by its methods created an

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atmosphere of suspicion, a stifling pressure of conformity, is only one piece of a double truth.

It can be asserted with almost equal justice that there is nothing easier in America at the present moment than speaking ill of McCarthy. In academic circles, for instance, particularly in the East, it is generally the pro-McCarthy position which occasions resentment and even ostracism; while in the country's major newspapers, and on the chief radio networks, the majority opinion, quite openly expressed, is unfavourable to the Senator from Wisconsin. For intellectual respectability (and one can understand "intellectual" in its broadest possible scope), it is *de rigueur* that one consider McCarthyism a major threat to liberty. I doubt that there has ever been gathered together a broader or more articulate united front than the one which opposes the behaviour of the present Chairman of the Permanent Sub-Committee on Investigations. Aside from the Communists and their more intimate friends (actually well aware that it is to their best interests that McCarthy continue to spread confusion), this front includes socialists and libertarians, Old Guard and New Deal Democrats, leading spokesmen for Jewish, Protestant, and liberal Catholic groups, and a strong representation of Republicans, including apparently the President and Vice-President of the United States.

It need hardly be said that such a group has little trouble in making itself heard; the daily press and the radio is open to its statements; its books are prominently and favourably reviewed; whereas the partisans of McCarthy find a certain resistance not easy to overcome. McCarthy is notoriously well covered by day-to-day reporting, to be sure, but I do not find in the Book Review Index, for instance, a single notice of his book, *The Fight Against Communism*; and a recent book favourable to McCarthy (*McCarthy and His Enemies* by W. F. Buckley and L. Brent Bozell) has received universally hostile comment. It is instructive, in this regard, to look through the additional material included in the Appendix to the *Congressional Record*, in which the opponents of McCarthy are able to quote from the leading newspapers of his own state, and from journals ranging from the Social Democratic *New Leader* to the Jesuit *America* and the Republican *Time*, while he and his friends can supplement the Hearst and McCormick press only with excerpts from the scarcely literate editorials of back-country weeklies.

And yet the statement made in article after article by the attackers of McCarthy, a statement repeated by commentators and re-echoed by commentators on the commentators, is that McCarthyism threatens, if it does not actually bludgeon into silence, all free criticism. From one end of the country to another rings the cry, "I am cowed! I am afraid to speak out!" and the even louder response, "Look, he is cowed! He is afraid to speak out!" In my own town, where it proved almost impossible to turn up a pro-McCarthy speaker for a recent forum, and where no library contains a copy of McCarthy's book, though Lattimore's version of his story is available, I have been told over and over that there is "something" now in the air which makes one swallow unsaid what once might have been spoken without a second thought.

One is tempted to laugh at first, to find only comedy in this constant frightened twittering back and forth among people who are in almost universal agreement. And yet—and yet, it was only with difficulty that I refrained from adding a parenthesis to the last sentence of the preceding paragraph, reading: "needless to say, our librarians are far from being Communists." The "needless to say" would have been a sop; there was some nagging fear in my mind that a careless reference, under the circumstances, might get the unimpeachable guardians of our books into trouble. I am convinced that the intellectual community has been an accomplice in creating this situation of fear; but it has been an accomplice after the fact. There *have* been some reprisals against the holders of ideas unpopular with McCarthy: a handful of nervous regents have dropped instructors in a few universities and colleges; in the public school system, there has been an occasional firing; sponsors on the radio have been particularly jittery; and in certain government agencies there has been a real terror, as McCarthyism has combined with the standard vagaries of

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bureaucratic administration and the usual rumour-mongering of bureaucratic underlings.

I WOULD suggest that the loud fears of the intellectuals, in so far as they are more than a tic of anxiety, are based on the suspicion that McCarthy represents not merely himself, his own ambition and chicanery, but a substantial popular hostility, immune to argument and logical proof, to much of what the intellectual community stands for. Certainly, it was disconcerting to discover not many months back that the majority of the American people were favourably disposed towards McCarthy, despite the fact that the larger part of their semi-official spokesmen were bitterly opposed to him. In a certain sense, McCarthyism not only flourishes in, but *is*, this hostility between the community and its intelligence.

The forces which McCarthy really represents (I mean his mass support, not the Texas millionaires of whom so much is made; anyone who persists in politics in America, whether he be right or left or centre, can get himself a millionaire or two) find their expression in the resolutely anti-intellectual small-town weeklies and in the professionally reactionary press, which continue to say in his name precisely what they have been saying now for thirty-five years. To realise this is to understand that McCarthyism, generally speaking, is an extension of the ambiguous American impulse towards "direct democracy," with its distrust of authority, institutions, and expert knowledge; and that more precisely, it is the form which populist theory takes when forced to define itself against such a competing "European" radicalism as Communism. McCarthy is a new voice for these forces; though scarcely a different one. The astonishing thing about McCarthy is his closeness to a standard kind of mid-western political figure, usually harmless and often comical. What defies analysis is the aura of fear which surrounds him and which cannot be justified in terms of what he is as a person.

Certainly, the facts of McCarthy's early life add scarcely anything to an understanding of the phenomenon for which he stands. There is so little in his career that is sinister, so much clearly banal and accidental, that those who dislike him find themselves tempted to over-interpret unfavourable data in a way embarrassingly reminiscent of McCarthy himself. There is a quality in the man that tends to infect even his most high-minded critics.

THE story of McCarthy's life is at first glance the rags-to-riches idyll of campaign literature: the son of a poor Wisconsin farmer, he worked hard from childhood on, taking from his father a small section of land that, single-handed at the age of sixteen, he made into a paying poultry farm. Indeed, he seemed on the very verge of prosperity when he broke down from overwork; and when he recovered, his ambitions had changed. He began the slow movement towards the big city which he has followed ever since, transferring first to the little town of Manawa, Wisconsin, where he became, not merely the successful manager of a grocery store, but the town's darling. Deciding that he needed an education to fulfil the hopes he had aroused in his fellow-townsmen, Joe finished an entire high-school course in the single year before he reached twenty-one, alternating extraordinary feats of memory with equally fervent bouts of physical activity; and went on to Marquette University, where he soon switched from Engineering to Law, though he was a shy and awkward speaker in public.

In college, McCarthy became a boxer of considerable ability, learned painfully to debate, was elected president of his class, and was graduated without particular academic distinction. After two years of law practice, he entered a political campaign for the first time, being defeated for Shawano County Attorney on the Democratic ticket, and decided, though he had glowed earlier with a hatred for Hoover in particular and the Republicans in general, that his future lay in that party. In 1939, at the age of thirty, he was elected Judge of Wisconsin District 10, winning an utterly unforeseen victory. All his early political activity was characterised by an incredible willingness to take pains, a complete contempt for expert predictions, and a fantastically unflagging energy.

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As a Judge he proceeded immediately to wipe out in a matter of months an apparently permanent backlog of 250 cases, never dropping behind in his calendar again, though this meant holding court in session past midnight on many occasions. When the war came, he took a leave of absence from his judicial post to enlist in the Marine Corps, where he served as an Air Intelligence Officer behind the front lines, volunteering from time to time to accompany bombing flights as an unofficial tail-gunner. Before the war was over, he left the Corps to enter national politics, making a first vain bid to get the Republican senatorial nomination from Alexander Wiley in 1944. He was finally elected to the Senate in 1946, after taking, in a victory that characteristically astonished everyone but himself, the Republican nomination from an over-confident Bob LaFollette, who had scarcely troubled to campaign.

Superficially the record is a cliché, embodying only too patly the "pluck and luck" of the legend; but one must accept as real the unquestioning will to victory (across his tent in Guadalcanal, McCarthy hung a banner reading: "McCarthy for U.S. Senate," though he was willing to pass it off as a joke) and the compulsive drive towards hard work, which led McCarthy after his election to slip off anonymously and work in the wheat fields.

It has often been alleged that McCarthy lacks principles; and certainly he is immune to most of the traditionally noble ones, desiring to succeed chiefly for success' sake and loving the feel of over-extended strength as an end in itself. To punish and be punished, to yield voluptuously to the fury of struggle—these *are* his principles, the fundamental values to which he is devoted. Though, as his name indicates, McCarthy's background is Irish and Catholic, he has none of the amiable fecklessness one associates with his stock; he has rather the Puritan's conviction that the desire to win is the guarantee of being chosen, the gift of energy a sign of salvation. He has apparently never doubted this, though he was for a while uncertain of what end he had been chosen for, aside from the important one of being Joe McCarthy. But his discovery of the Communist issue settled his doubts quickly, giving to his undefined conviction of a mission, a sanction at once moral and political. His notorious shopping around for "a cause," up until 1950, must in the light of this be considered something far more complicated than simple opportunism.

A CLOSER look at the record reveals the shoddy underpinnings of the legend—but this also is typical. From the start, McCarthy's career has been marked by broken promises and betrayals of confidence (his very first office was obtained behind the back and at the expense of his law partner who had similar ambitions); and by a series of "deals," petty or large. His appearance of simple virtue goes to pieces under the most superficial scrutiny; though he has been able all along to establish legal innocence of various charges against him, he has emerged always morally indicted. In his early campaign for the Judgeship, he apparently overspent the statutory allowance and consistently misrepresented his opponent's age in his campaign literature; and even in his famous clearing up of the docket, he turns out to have shown more haste than discretion, conniving in a series of astonishingly quick divorces for friends, personal and political. He seems also to have contravened the clear intent of a Wisconsin law forbidding Judges to run for public office while maintaining their tenure on the bench; though he could not be convicted because he was running for Federal rather than State office. His whole subsequent career has followed the same pattern: from the production of a pamphlet on housing for which he was paid $10,000 dollars by Lustron, a private manufacturer of prefabricated housing much interested in the legislation before McCarthy's Housing Committee, through his tangled relations with sugar-consuming industries that earned him the name of the "Pepsi-Cola Kid."

McCarthy has been shown up, too, in another favourite practice of the politician, the refurbishing of his own record and the blackening of his opponent's by the discreet manipulation of truth. McCarthy's election as a Judge at the age of thirty was not considered striking enough: it must be made twenty-eight. His

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enlistment as a First Lieutenant in the Marine Corps must be revised for public consumption into volunteering as a private and working his way up through the ranks. A job as an Intelligence Officer must become an assignment as tail-gunner; a leg smashed up during horseplay aboard ship must be turned into a combat wound, recognised by the Purple Heart—finally metamorphosised into "ten pounds of shrapnel" carried with an exaggerated limp. It is possible that McCarthy does not even consider such conventional accommodation of facts as unethical; he seems especially proud of his own truthfulness, and whenever he and some opponent come into absolute conflict over a question of fact, he typically cries out for a lie-detector test with all the air of a much abused citizen turning to science to redeem him.

He practises in addition the college debator's device (I can dimly remember my own Debate Coach recommending it to me with a wink) of waving about irrelevant papers as he makes some especially undocumented statement. This is a clue, I think, to his whole attitude: the "plain" man's conviction that figures are useful only for bolstering, after the fact, an intuitive judgement or insight. Despite his research staff, and his recent willingness to do a little homework on his charges, McCarthy seems still incapable of believing that it *really* matters whether there are 200, 81, or 57 Communists in a certain branch of the Government. He appears clearly convinced that those of his opponents who concern themselves with such discrepancies are stupidly or insidiously trying to divert attention from what truly matters.

But McCarthy's distortion of the truth is not merely a particular development of the politician's hyperbole; it is also the courtroom lawyer's unchallenged device for "making a case" rather than establishing a fact. The politically naïve citizen called for jury duty in any town in the United States begins by being horrified (but never horrified enough!) at what seems to him at first a contempt for the truth, but is revealed later as the lawyer's assumption that there is no truth: that guilt or innocence are matters, not of moral judgement or even of established fact, but of a decision arrived at inside a devious technical code of procedure. I do not place McCarthy in this context to justify him, but rather to condemn the system of which he is a pathological symptom. Anyone unwilling to believe how like most other lawyers McCarthy is, should volunteer to serve on a jury; or short of that, should read the reports of other Congressional investigations, preferably of those with whose ends one is in general sympathy: of war profiteers, say, or organisers of anti-labour violence; or it would suffice, perhaps, to read through the report of the Tydings Sub-Committee, which condemned McCarthy, to see just how clearly such investigations distinguish between looking into facts and proving a case. To change the rules of *all* Congressional Investigating Committees so that at least the safeguards of the courtroom will be provided for what has become a judicial procedure, to insist on the right of confrontation, representation by counsel, etc.—all this will help; but it will not solve the underlying problem I have tried to define. In certain ways, it would seem more desirable to make the proceedings of Congressional investigation less formal, less like trial procedure; leaving to the courts the business of establishing technical innocence or guilt, and reserving for the legislative branch, as our national conscience, the task of finding the truth. One can imagine no person less equipped for such a task than the run-of-the-mill lawyer trained in the cynical school of the community courtroom.

But there remains in McCarthy's handling of the truth a more sophisticated and "modern" use of the lie than the politician's or the lawyer's. It is a concept of "symbolic" truth-telling, which has, of course, always existed, but which has entered into public life with especial vigour in recent years. It is tempting to call it a "totalitarian" concept, for it has been much exploited by Communists and Fascists; but it is, alas, also a favourite device of even hard-pressed conservatives and liberals; once the process is begun on either side, the other seems forced to respond in kind. A McCarthyite will say, for instance, "There have been dozens of Communist agents in the

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State Department," meaning merely that the influence of Communist ideas, at one remove or another, at one time or another, has helped determine State Department policy for the worse. To which the liberal will answer, "There are no Communist agents in the State Department and there never have been any," meaning simply that, in so far as men and notions influenced by the Communists have played a role in the State Department, they have been idealistic in inspiration and intention and probably haven't done any harm anyway. The Communists themselves have a "scientific" system of symbolic discourse, making the charge, for instance, that Social Democrats are "objectively" on the side of Fascism, etc.

McCarthy, of course, is not capable of distinctions between "objective" and "subjective" allegiance, any more than he can distinguish between ends and means; but his intellectual and proto-intellectual supporters are quite willing to sustain him on these grounds, both publicly and to themselves. There is no doubt in my own mind that the late Robert Taft, for instance, supported McCarthy (despite waverings and reservations) because he himself had long been convinced that, "objectively," socialists were no different from Communists, and leftish New Dealers no different from either; so that calling any supporter of the "Welfare State" a Communist, though perhaps rude and impolitic, was not actually wrong.

Still, Taft was always a little uncomfortable about it all. The simple-minded McCarthyite, however, has no trouble at all; he is not disturbed about the problem of whether a lie can be "objectively" true, because a political lie does not seem to him to be morally reprehensible. McCarthy's position depends not at all upon fair play or respect for conscience, whereas the moral *raison d'être* of his opponents is their scrupulousness; and it is for this reason that these opponents, once betrayed into playing his game of symbolic truth-telling, are at a disadvantage. They find themselves in a terrible dilemma in this regard; granted the discrepancy between their values and that of the vast public, they can hardly ever be quite candid without seeming to confess a guilt they do not feel; and granted their own morality, they cannot trifle with the truth without feeling a guilt they may not confess.

How have the intellectuals fallen into such a plight? There has always been a greater or lesser split in the United States between the Ordinary Voter and the Man Seriously Interested in Politics; and this difference was exaggerated and specially defined in the years between the triumph of the Russian Revolution and the Great Depression. Unlike Western Europe, where a gradually Marxist-influenced working-class and intelligentsia have found a way of neutralising old tensions in finding common attitudes towards the Soviet Union, in America the influence of Marxism, however remote, has served only to separate the intellectuals decisively from the mass of people.

The intellectuals, including brighter college students, newspaper reporters, lawyers, and professional people, as well as artists and political theorists, had—during the 1930's—as a typical initiation into the intellectual community (the case of Robert Oppenheimer, recently much bruited, is a classic instance) a brief bout of fellow-travelling, or, at least, the experience of collaboration and friendly intercourse with Communists and fellow-travellers. Communists and liberals seemed once to be bound together, not only by a passionate revulsion from war and the inequities of capitalism, but more positively, too, by certain tastes in books and in the arts, by shared manners and vocabulary—and especially by the sense of moral engagement that used to be called "social consciousness." From this feeling of fellowship, the great Popular Front organisations of the 1930's were forged; in the teeth, as it were, of the ordinary voter, who—immune to all this—identified not only the Communists but their most distant friends with free love, looting, and general iniquity; and who were condescended to majestically by the enlightened, thus storing up a special resentment for the hour of disillusion.

From the time of the Sacco and Vanzetti Case—that is to say, from 1927—until 1946, it

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seemed that America had chosen sides in a bloodless civil war. To the liberal-intellectual,* "We" consisted of the supporters of trade-unionism, social security, and the rights of Negroes, Jews, and other minorities, including socialists and even Communists ("rude but on our side"); while "They" were constituted of Red-baiters, readers of the Hearst press, supporters of Franco, and, *ad libitum*, members of the Catholic hierarchy, William Green and the AFL, Southern Senators, football players, American Legionnaires, etc. The questioning by McCarthy of Reed Harris, Deputy Administrator of the International Information Administration, illustrates the difficulties such a conventional categorising can occasion years later. Despite his record of loyal and excellent service in government, Harris was quizzed at length over a book he had written when just out of college, called *King Football*; and the McCarthy Committee thought it worth while to quote, as a presumable example of "disloyalty," Harris' identification of someone as "a sadistic butcher who is now probably the commander of some American Legion Post." The complicated innocence of such a remark made in the 1930's is almost impossible to explain to an American veteran who is very proud of his membership in the Legion.

I do not want to seem to exaggerate the Communist influence on American life; in a political sense, the movement was a failure in the United States, for it never appealed to any large number of the workers and poorer farmers to whom it presumably spoke most directly. Indeed, it never won even the total allegiance, much less the actual adherence, of the intellectuals. But it *did* manage to establish itself in the intellectual community as an acceptable variant of the liberal-humanistic tradition—and even more, made its recognition as such a variant the very test of political decency. This confusion not only enabled such Party members as Hiss to regard their activities as the expression of a higher loyalty to "Humanity," but even made it possible for others like Julian Wadleigh, too "liberal" to join the Party, to commit espionage for the Soviet Union. And it has bequeathed to us the bewildering concept of an undefinable "Left," which obscures for us the actualities of the political situation.

Indeed, the childish division of the world into good and evil was never really politics in a practical sense, but the translation of social and economic problems into ethical melodrama. Yet, for a while, when the free world and Russia were allies against the Nazis, even history itself seemed to connive in the illusion. The war against Hitlerism added to "our side" (i.e. the liberals' side) the glow of war-time solidarity and even the patriotic slogans hitherto usurped by the "other side." But even without a Hitler, the desire to make virtue depend, not so much on what one did as on what one was, would have triumphed; and the temptation to simplify international conflict into the confrontation of sheer wrong and simple right could not have been resisted.

The liberal-internationalists found justification for their self-righteousness in the knowledge that they were immune to platitudes and conventional rhetoric; that they were more intelligent, read better books, liked superior music and pictures, could use the vocabularies of advanced thought. Certainly, intelligence in itself is an advantage, and the majority of the intelligent were on the liberal side: but intelligence is not synonymous with virtue nor is it a specific against either political error or malice. The intelligent do not make the same mistakes as others, or at least they do not make them for the same reasons; but even when they are buttressed with goodwill, they do err. And they were wrong, drastically wrong, about the most important political fact of our time.

* I cannot in all honesty resist defining this term, though I should have preferred to leave its meanings implicit. To describe the allegiances of the group is to define it sufficiently; but it is perhaps wise to forestall objections by stating explicitly that I use the word "liberal" (and "intellectual" is, for better or worse, historically synonymous with it in America) to mean all those who believe or believed Sacco and Vanzetti innocent, who considered the diplomatic recognition of the Soviet Union not merely wise strategically but a "progressive" step, and who identified themselves with the Loyalist side during the Civil War in Spain. It is, perhaps, unnecessary to say that I consider myself one of this group.

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It is true that McCarthy himself has revealed no dangerous hidden Communists; has proved little beyond the foolishness and uncertainty of many who have appeared before his Committee. But insofar as he is the personification of a long-inarticulate movement, of the sullen self-consciousness of a sizeable minority (at least), he *begins* with a victory that he cannot fritter away, no matter how many errors he makes or how many downright lies he tells.

The emergence of McCarthy out of the wreckage of the LaFollette Progressive Movement in Wisconsin is a clue to what he represents. He inherits the bitterest and most provincial aspects of a Populism to which smooth talking has always meant the Big City, and the Big City, the Enemy. Traditionally, that Enemy has been identified with "Wall Street," but from the middle twenties on there has been a tendency to give an equal status to "internationalism" and "international Communism." It was not until 1950, however, that McCarthy discovered a symbolic butt in "the State Department Communist," "the Park Avenue Pinko," capable of welding together the fractured Populist image of the Enemy. In light of this, it is just as important that McCarthy's initial attack was directed against the State Department under Acheson (and against Harvard behind him) as that it was directed against the Communists. Acheson is the projection of all the hostilities of the mid-Western mind at bay: his waxed moustache, his cultivated accent, his personal loyalty to a traitor who also belonged to the Harvard Club; one is never quite sure that he was not invented by a pro-McCarthy cartoonist.

With something like genius, McCarthy added the connotation of wealth and effete culture to treachery, topping it all off with the suggestion of homosexuality. His constant sneering references to "State Department perverts" are not explained by his official view that such unfortunates are subject to blackmail, but represent his sure sense of the only other unforgivable sin besides being a Communist. The definition of the Enemy is complete; opposite in all respects to the Ideal American, who is simple, straightforward, ungrammatical, loyal, and one hundred per cent male. Such an Enemy need not be proven guilty; he is guilty by definition.

But the Enemy for McCarthy is not only a dandy, a "queer," an intellectual, and a Communist; he is, or was at least in the beginning, a Democrat or Democrat's friend. The struggle between the liberal intellectual and the old line "red-baiter" has been absurdly confused with the contest for votes between the Democratic and Republican Parties. This seems, in part, clearly accidental. McCarthy himself was for a while a Democrat (and Mr. Roy Cohn still proudly declares himself one); and, at the start, his charges were taken up largely as ammunition to be used against the Ins, who happened to be Democrats, by the Outs, who happened to be Republicans. It was possible at first to believe that there was no anti-Communist conviction at all behind McCarthy's campaign against the State Department, merely a desire to slander his opponents and advance the fortunes of his own party; but one senses in him the happy coincidence of conviction and strategy.

Does the Republican Party have any right to claim the mantle of anti-Communism as its own? Certainly, there have been leading "red-baiters" in both parties, and dupes of the Communists in both, too. Yet it is true that the Democratic Party had become in the early days of the New Deal, not liberal perhaps, but certainly liberal-coloured; finding a place in its ranks, somewhere between the big city bosses and the Southern reactionaries, for fellow-travelling professors, left-wing C.I.O. trade-unionists, and especially for a new kind of practical politician who had learned to adapt the vocabulary and attitudes of the true liberal to his own constant opportunism. Roosevelt himself was a representative of this heterogeneous group, and his own approach to the Soviet Union was deeply conditioned by the stereotypes and conventional allegiances of the liberal, at a point when the liberals were most victimised by illusions about the Soviet Union.

The Roosevelt Administration pushed safeguards for labour and provisions for social

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security to the verge of what Republican conservatives like to call "The Welfare State"; and though these latter can, of course, not undo such measures, they can deplore them—or condemn the "philosophy" behind them: which is to say, they can call liberal-coloured improvisation a philosophy, and name it "creeping socialism." The spokesmen for this ideological opposition to the New Deal were tempted to use the exposure of real or alleged Communists in the Roosevelt bureaucracy as objective proof of a kinship of ideas between Left-wing Democrats and Bolsheviks. And they found in the jittery and uninformed reactions of men like Truman more fuel than they had hoped for. Fearful that granting any truth to the Republican charges might lose them votes, the Democrats arrayed themselves in strict party lines, and put themselves in the absurd position of denying Chamber's allegations about Hiss as a "red herring." The way was open for McCarthy to make the whole New Deal seem nothing but a cover-up for Communist infiltration and espionage. It would, of course, be absurd to accuse the Democrats of any real desire to assist Communists; but they did often choose to deny what they knew to be true, in the interests of vote-getting.

It was a strange and embarrassing opportunity for the Republicans, who found themselves on the popular side of an issue for the first time since 1932. Anti-Communism in America has always been strongest among farmers, industrial workers (where there is a strong Catholic influence), and the lowest level of the middle class. The votes which clinched McCarthy's first Senatorial victory came not only from the wealthier Catholic farmers of Wisconsin, but from the working-class districts of Kenosha, Racine, and Milwaukee, ordinarily considered safe for the Democrats. And once McCarthy had brought into the open a problem which opposed to "the People," not the "Economic Royalists," but the "Intellectuals," a new kind of Republican was needed to assume leadership. This Senator Taft appears to have seen; and perhaps he knew all along that though he was called "Mr. Republican," he could not himself have made the populist appeal; certainly, in this light his otherwise inexplicable support of McCarthy, his willingness to tout him in speeches dedicated to "political morality," makes a kind of sense.

If there is a blackness in McCarthy, it is not the reactionary blackness of the oil interests or of the Catholic hierarchy, but of something in the American people which distrusts equally "red tape" and "reds," which grows impatient with law and order, with understanding and polite talk, when it feels it has been betrayed. The fight against McCarthyism must be carried on, but those who wage it must be aware that they are faced with a situation in which a widespread moral indignation against Communists and their sympathisers has far outstripped the community's legal procedures for dealing with them.

In light of this, the constant hope that McCarthy's following can be won away if only some forcefully written exposé could be put into their hands, or if only someone would stand up to him boldly enough at the hearings, is revealed as fantasy. Equally chimeric is the dream that "given enough rope he will hang himself," that some lie revealed, some exceptionally absurd accusation hastily dropped, will damn McCarthy in the eyes of his fondest followers. I am not trying to suggest that McCarthy cannot be defeated. I am sure that if the Republican National Committee cuts him off unequivocally, those of his adherents who are allured only by the aura of success will depart. A look at the decline of McCarthy's vote from 1946 to 1952 indicates how much damage can be done by the defection of even a few influential people inside his own party; and certainly the opposition to McCarthy continues to grow in Republican ranks, with those who seem at first glance closest to him beginning to edge away. Vice-President Nixon is the representative figure; himself an "inquisitor" (he must get the chief credit for Hiss' exposure before the House Un-American Activities Committee) and an exploiter of anti-Communism as a campaign issue, he has nonetheless a desire for intellectual respectability. "This is just a note," he wrote to James Wechsler in January of

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1950, "to tell you that I thought your editorial on the Hiss case . . . was one of the most able and fair appraisals of a very difficult problem I have ever seen. Since you probably have me categorised as one of the 'reactionaries' . . . I thought you might be particularly interested in my reaction." This letter, to one whom McCarthy finds it advisable to call a concealed Communist, reveals clearly the difference in Nixon's approach that must force him to a final break with McCarthy.

Most recently, McCarthy has further weakened his position inside the Republican Party with his defence of the "young officer" who transmitted to him a classified FBI Report on Communists in the Army, and his assertion that all government employees "are duty bound to give me information even though some bureaucrat may have stamped it secret." Under a Democratic administration, his Republican colleagues might have found it possible to ignore the positing of such a "higher" allegiance, embarrassingly reminiscent of Communist theory, but with Eisenhower in the White House they have felt forced to take a stand. Attorney-General Brownell has set the tone by attacking publicly "an individual [coyly unnamed] who may seek to set himself above the laws of the land . . ." and even some of McCarthy's staunchest supporters have hastened to dissociate themselves from his position on this matter.

But many leading Republicans are apparently not yet sure that McCarthy can be disavowed without losing votes, and the melancholy conclusion seems warranted that McCarthy will not be cast off until it is politically expedient. Perhaps what will sink him in the end is a personal quirk, his almost compulsive hatred of the army and its "Brass," which has led to his most unpopular moves: the investigation of the Malmédy massacre, the (since-repented) attack on MacArthur, the book-length onslaught on General Marshall (with unfavourable side-glances at Eisenhower); and the tongue-lashing of General Zwicker which helped precipitate the recent Army hearings. This is an age of Generals, and McCarthy's distaste for them may eventually compromise him, though liberals may find small comfort in such a dog-eat-dog defeat.

But none of this inner-party manœuvring will touch the large numbers of people for whom McCarthy establishes in history the nightmare they have dreamed in private; and that group, which preceded Joe McCarthy, will survive him. The fight against McCarthyism is more than the fight against McCarthy; it is a struggle against the distortions of the Right and the outlived illusions of the Left, against the blind resentment of the American mob and the arrogant superciliousness of the American intellectual. In this fight, each victory is only a new beginning.

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THE LONELY MAN

A CAT sits on the pavement by the house.
It lets itself be touched, then slides away.
A girl goes by in a hood; the winter noon's
Long shadows lengthen. The cat is grey,
It sits there. It sits there all day, every day.

A collie bounds into my arms: he is a dog
And, therefore, finds nothing human alien.
He lives at the preacher's with a pair of cats.
The soft half-Persian sidles to me;
Indoors, the old white one watches blindly.

How cold it is! Some snow slides from a roof
When a squirrel jumps off it to a squirrel-proof
Feeding-station; and, a lot and two yards down,
A fat spaniel snuffles out to me
And sobers me with his untrusting frown.

He worries about his yard: past it, it's my affair
If I halt Earth in her track—his duty's done.
And the cat and the collie worry about the old one;
They come, when she's out too, so uncertainly . . .
It's my block; I know them, just as they know me.

As for the others, those who wake up every day
And feed these, keep the houses, ride away
To work—I don't know them, they don't know me.
Are we friends or enemies? Why, who can say?
We nod to each other sometimes, in humanity:

Or search one another's faces with a yearning
Remnant of faith that's almost animal . . .
The grey cat that just sits there: surely it is learning
To be a man; will find, soon, *some especial*
Opening in a good firm for a former cat.

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Randall Jarrell

CINDERELLA

Her imaginary playmate was a grown-up
In sea-coal satin. The flame-blue glances,
The wings gauzy as the membrane that the ashes
Draw over an old ember—as the mother
In a jug of cider—were a comfort to her.
They sat by the fire and told each other stories.

"What men want . . ." said the godmother softly
—How she went on it is hard for a man to say.
Their eyes, on their Father, were monumental marble.
Then they laughed like two old women, bussed each other,
Said, "Gossip, gossip," and, lapped in each other's looks,
Mirror for mirror, drank a cup of tea.

Of cambric tea. But there is a reality
Under the good silk of the good sisters'
Good ball gowns. *They* knew . . . Hard-breasted, naked-eyed,
She pushed her silk feet into glass, and rose within
A gown of imaginary gauze: the shy prince drank
A toast to her in champagne from her slipper

And breathed, "Bewitching!" Breathed, "I am bewitched!"
—She said to her godmother, "Men!"
And, later, looking down to see her flesh
Look back up from under lace, the ashy gauze
And pulsing marble of a bridal veil,
She wished it all a widow's coal-black weeds.

A sullen wife and a reluctant mother,
She sat all day in silence by the fire.
Better, later, to stare past her sons' sons,
Her daughters' daughters, and tell stories to the fire.
But best, dead, damned, to rock forever
Beside Hell's fireside—to see within the flames

The Heaven to whose gold-gauzed door there comes
A little dark old woman, the God's Mother,
And cries, "Come in, come in! My Son's out now,
Out now, will be back soon, may be back never,
Who knows, eh? *We* know what they are—men, men!
But come, come in till then! Come in till then!"

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John Muggeridge

A Subaltern in Kenya

BEFORE I was posted to Kenya my knowledge of that sad but beautiful country was based partly on School Certificate Geography, and partly on the first newspaper reports about the outbreak of Mau Mau terrorism. I had learnt that Nairobi was its capital, that there was a port at Mombasa and that somewhere within its boundaries was a high plateau comparable, I thought, to Northern Scotland. I also knew, as we all did, that an African tribe called the Kikuyu had just begun a very unpleasant rebellion against the British Government. What follows is an attempt to describe my impressions on being suddenly thrust into the midst of a bloody war against a people of whose existence I had previously been scarcely aware, in a country which hitherto had meant nothing more to me than a red patch on the east coast of the map of Africa. My tour of duty in Kenya lasted fourteen months. During that time I was only away from the Mau Mau affected area once, for a four weeks' leave in Mombasa.

IN early December 1952 I left London groping its way through one of the thickest fogs in its history.

Journeys out, I have discovered in my small experience of air travel, run smoothly without the engine breaking down, without delay of any kind. It is only when one is bound for home that trouble begins. Exactly at the appointed time, twenty-eight hours after leaving England, we emerged on the tarmac at Eastleigh Airport, Nairobi, slightly dazed, blinking in the equatorial sun, sweating mightily in our stuffy battle-dress and longing for a cool drink or at least a suit of khaki drill to wear. The customs officials and the military police looked so unruffled, so comfortable in their smart sand-coloured uniforms—not even unduly sunburnt. As for the Emergency, it seemed completely and utterly unreal. I began to wonder if it was not the invention of a bored foreign correspondent. Why else did the contented-looking, well-groomed men, who were so busily ordering taxis and directing passengers to the bar, have not as much as a revolver between them? Then quite suddenly I realised that these few elegant Europeans were surrounded, outnumbered by, and entirely dependent on a host of black servants who hurried silent, bare-footed about their master's business. And as I watched those faces, I had an uneasy feeling that if the Africans ever seriously took into their heads to be rid of the Whites for ever, they could do so as a dog shakes the last drops of rain from his back.

Nairobi is a sprawling, dusty city. It has a small fashionable centre where are the European-owned shops, the "good" hotels, and two expensive night clubs, a European residential area, an Asian quarter around quite an impressive mosque, and further out the inevitable native locations with a higher, thicker population than the European and Asian communities put together. The Europeans in Nairobi are either in business, government service, or merely on holiday from up country. The Asians are principally shopkeepers, clerks, or business men; there is at least one Asian-owned hotel in Nairobi barred to all except Whites. In a way, European Nairobi is like West Berlin, with the other half of the city

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occupied by a strange and possibly hostile people, whose "Native Land Units" (in which Europeans may only live as administrators or Government officials) surround it on all sides. This may be an exaggeration; but at any rate in the few days I spent there before joining my unit, I felt lonely, insecure, and isolated.

Soon after my arrival in Kenya I walked through Nairobi at night. On the pavement outside the banks and business houses, watchmen were crouching silent over fires of stray newspaper and old packing cases. Then suddenly one of them shouted across the street to his fellow, in the guttural grunting accents of the Kikuyu language. It was certainly not a joke, neither a remark about politics or the weather. It seemed more urgent. A message, perhaps, which required no answer, only to be passed on from mouth to mouth, until the news spread throughout the whole tribe. Perhaps at last the war horn had sounded, at last a million Kikuyu were ready to fulfil their terrible oath and rise up against their "European oppressors." I hurried back to camp and the welcome protection of armed sentries. Later I visited Nairobi many times, but then it was always a friendly refuge from the wariness of Mount Kenya. Only once did I feel again the insecurity and loneliness of a city divided against itself. I was sitting in the bar of the New Stanley Hotel when suddenly two shots rang out, a faint, desperate voice trailing into the distance called "Help! Help! Police!" Nobody so much as put down his glass, or looked up from the conversation.

THE Kikuyu reserve must certainly include some of the most beautiful scenery in the world. On the equator, 4,000 feet is the perfect height above sea-level. Bananas, pineapples, paw-paw, oranges, and grape fruit flourish—yet the climate is not unbearably hot. Though there are enough flowers and trees to remind one of the north, even at night I never felt unduly cold. The soil has a rich, deep-red fertility which one sees to a lesser extent in the west of England. Water, a treasured possession on European farms because it is so scarce, flows down every gulley however small, or sometimes just bubbles out of the ground. Kikuyu will only live in close villages when forced to do so. They prefer to scatter their "bomas" in long straggling lines down the many narrow ridges which divide one stream from the next. The result is that their country appears deserted and yet is seething with people. From time to time one catches sight of them, crouching on their heels outside a hut, moving noiselessly through banana groves or merely standing on the side of the road, a puzzled, frightened expression on their faces. The men herd the cattle and sheep, while the women work in the maize-fields, draw water from the nearby stream, or collect fire-wood. Market day is a peculiar sight for a white man accustomed to paying respect to feminine frailty. Long processions of women bent double under the weight of both an enormous amount of produce and a child tied on their backs Chinese-fashion, follow silently and grimly behind a crowd of happy, laughing Kikuyu who completely ignore their wives and sisters. They do not work hard. They have only to scratch the earth's surface for it to yield abundant harvests, so rich is the land in their reserve.

Fighting Mau Mau was not at all simple or straightforward. After forty-eight hours continuous patrolling we might shoot one or perhaps even two terrorists or recapture a small number of firearms, and return to read in the newspapers next day that a hundred Kikuyu had vanished into the forest from such and such a district or that in Nairobi two hundred weapons were missing last month. Our small successes were always overshadowed by more substantial gains on the part of the enemy. We seemed to be making little headway. Certain manifestations of Mau Mau could not be dealt with easily by the security forces, and it seemed to us that it would be a good plan to pit against the terrorists a trained and well-armed body of Kikuyu loyalists. For this purpose the Kikuyu, Embu, and Meru guard was formed. It was to be a nucleus of tribesmen hostile to Mau Mau in every scattered community, so that the force of law and order should be felt by the terrorised and frightened populace who so often looked in vain for protection and moral support.

These loyalists were duly armed, trained, and had built for them fortified posts from which

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to operate. They were not only to provide a rallying point for their weaker-hearted brethren, but also to watch and report on local terrorist activities. But unhappily this did not happen. Too often the guard posts opened their gates to the enemy without a shot being fired, information reached enemy ears to which loyalists alone had access, men were murdered and not a hand raised to save them. So great was our lack of confidence in this loyalist guard that it was quite seriously suggested that when outnumbered by a gang, loyalists should be advised to run away, hiding their weapons and ammunition in the bush, returning later to recover them. This plan, however, was never actually adopted.

Although morale was high throughout our battalion, we felt that we were fighting alone and that Mau Mau had gained too great a hold on the Kikuyu for us to be able to rely on the loyalists' efforts. Of course there were exceptions. There were men who had demonstrated clearly to whom they owed allegiance by risking their lives countless times, often giving up home and lands to join the fight against Mau Mau. To us they remained shining exceptions. In principle we agreed with "General" China who compared the effect of the Kikuyu Guard on the Mau Mau to a cyclist whose tyre is punctured—a slight inconvenience easily overcome.

ARMED Mau Mau gangs—so-called "hard-core" terrorists who hide during the day and usually operate at night—are, in a way, the least formidable opponents of the security forces. More dangerous are those among the local tribesmen who either willingly or under duress shelter the gangsters, provide them with food, and give them much needed information regarding the movement of troops and police. Hard-core terrorists invariably disclose their identity by running away from troops or at the worst attacking them. The Mau Mau "Fifth Column," who have been rated as high as 95 per cent of the total Kikuyu population, cannot likewise be distinguished. They not only do not flee from security patrols, but welcome them and are very willing to be questioned and searched by them. Their identification papers are always in order. They have always paid and possess receipts for the current poll tax. They are invariably good citizens who are often members of the local mission, sometimes even working for the Kikuyu Guard. Although they never do anything to arouse suspicion, the majority of them are known to be aiding and abetting Mau Mau. The result is that all Kikuyu have to be treated as suspect. The D.C.'s clerk, the telephone operator, the house boy, the hotel bar-tender—all are skilled workers, invaluable to the community, yet one or all of them may be reporting to the enemy on one's every word and action. Frequently Mau Mau have gained great advantage from this efficient intelligence service. A King's African Rifles company was once withdrawn from a forward position at extremely short notice for a rest and refit. The next day a military vehicle was ambushed in that very locality. Six men were seriously wounded and a rifle lost and reinforcements had to be called for from twenty miles away. (Occasionally, too, Mau Mau have been handicapped by the very accuracy of the information they have been given. Knowing which chair a certain farmer was accustomed to use every evening, they fired shot after shot through the back of it. Luckily the farmer had retired to bed earlier than usual that night.)

Wherever one went in the areas of Kenya affected by the Emergency, one was surrounded by potential enemies. Projected journeys could not be mentioned on the telephone, military plans could only be discussed within soundproof walls. Not only armed forces, but settlers, government officials, everyone, had continually to remain vigilant, continually to guard their tongues, and to watch their native servants. The fear of disclosing vital secrets to the enemy, of allowing arms or ammunition to be stolen, of endangering the lives of friends by some carelessness, created a nerve-wracking tension that was almost more difficult to bear than the fear of actual attack from the enemy. Africans have a faculty for appearing suddenly, silently, and apparently from nowhere. An important battalion manœuvre was under discussion. The C.O. turned behind him, angrily pointing to a mess-waiter industriously dusting a table. "How long has he been there?" he

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demanded. No one knew. "What's his business?" "Dusting," answered the waiter. The entire operation was cancelled.

At the house of an Italian missionary, drinking Kenya coffee (which incidentally really does taste of the fragrant smell of coffee), my fellow guest asked him rather tactlessly, "What good are missionaries doing in the Kikuyu Reserve?" The priest answered at once. "At the moment none at all. But you soldiers, are you doing any better?" We told him proudly that we were defending Kikuyu land for the Kikuyu. "Then why," he asked, "do you kill Kikuyu?" This was our painful duty, we explained. The rotten limbs must be destroyed in order that the whole tree should not be infected. "You fools," he shouted at us excitedly, "the Kikuyu have only inherited your own rottenness. Having exploited them for so long, you are surprised that they have learnt your crooked ways. You gave them rifles and wonder that they use them against you. Having told them that one day the country would be theirs, you are horrified that they clamour for self-government. What *are* the unfortunate Kikuyu to think ? First they were slaves, then hosts to a guest who showed no signs of leaving; but now they have tired of the white man and his unfulfilled promises. They would be rid of him, and left to themselves. They have learnt all that you have to teach them. Only the lesson of Christ remains, and we go to them unarmed to teach it."

The words of that Italian priest affected me profoundly. I began to wonder uneasily what point there really was in this bloody war by the Kikuyu, against the Kikuyu, for the Kikuyu. Yet I dared not take what he had said to heart. It was a direct negation of every order I had received since arriving in East Africa. Then, some days later, my misgivings about the rights or wrongs of the war in Kenya vanished: four miles from the company base we found the body of ex-chief Erasto, horribly mutilated by the Mau Mau. Early one morning, we were rudely awakened by the local headman. The shaft of his spear rattled uncontrollably against the ground so shaken with terror was he. Erasto, he said, was lying in a pool of blood outside the charred remains of his hut. Such is the Kikuyu's fear of Mau Mau that he never dares mention them by name. We were led to where "they" had burnt down Erasto's hut; where "they" had abducted his wives and children, and where "they" had left a cynical note thanking us for affording them a pleasant evening's entertainment. It was not so much that callous message soaked in Erasto's blood lying beside his dismembered body which brought home to me the evil of Mau Mau terrorism; but the fact that Erasto had been their friend, an open supporter of their cause, and had he not been considered too old and useless, would himself have been hung for consorting with them.

It was on a Sunday that I saw my first Mau Mau. The Kikuyu have an old-fashioned notion that on Sundays white men either go to church, or get drunk. So Sunday is their day for coming out of the forest, visiting their families, and generally resting from their labours. As usual, they ran like startled birds, and we followed until at last we caught up with a straggler. The first thing I noticed was the paleness of his skin, so long had he hidden in the dark forest. He might well have been a half-caste. He wore three suits of clothes against the cold of the moorlands above the forest. His face was unshaved, bleeding from a lucky shot, convulsed with pain and fear. We found him crouched on all fours in a river, like some wild animal at bay, his eyes rolling from side to side, searching in vain for a way of escape. He was incapable of speech, incapable even of movement. As he sat there waiting to be taken and I watched his blood carried away down-stream, I confess that I felt no pity for him. I had come a long way. Theirs is such a senseless carnage. Their grievance is against the white man, yet they hack down European, Asian, African as indiscriminately and avidly as they clear the trees from a forest path. They have reverted to savagery. And of all the savages they seem to me to be the most ignoble.

Mount Kenya is most impressive at dawn, before every living thing is either burnt up by and exhausted by the sun, or soaked and

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jaded in eternal rain. We were moving towards the forest edge just before first light. An endless procession of ungainly "three-tonners" slithered this way and that on a narrow treacherous track, headlights probing that blind misty darkness which engulfs a mountain side before sunrise. All other sound was lost in the screech of bottom gear. All eyes were strained to follow the flickering tail light of the vehicle in front. From time to time we would stop. Anxious voices would hail each other: "Seen anything of A Company?" "One of their trucks stuck in a rain ditch about three miles back." "Go on without them. They'll see our tracks." "Start up!" "Start up!"

A cigarette offered or received, a quick word of thanks and back we would climb to our high uncomfortable perches next to the driver. Once more the long column of trucks moved uncertainly forward. Our world narrowed to the stuffy cab, our only companion a grinning native hunched over the steering wheel, immersed in the awful responsibility of preventing thirty Askaris, one European, and three tons of steel from slipping off the crown of the road. Then a sudden jagged hole appeared in the wall of seemingly impenetrable greyness which surrounded us. There, as if no such thing as mist or darkness existed, Mount Kenya's cloudless peaks glittered in morning sunshine. Such was the contrast between night and day, that not only the sun seemed to radiate light but the sky, the mountain snow, even the parting clouds.

Quite apart from Mau Mau, there is an alarming amount of madness in the Kikuyu reserve. Possibly like giving a man pure oxygen to breathe, we have confronted the natives with our civilisation too suddenly, and all its implications and complications have affected their minds. I went shopping one afternoon in the local market. There was the square line of simple grey stone shops displaying highly coloured incongruous advertisements for Coca-Cola. There was the tiny market square piled high with the local produce, strands of sisal, sacks overflowing with maize, enormous oranges neatly laid out on a banana leaf, bundles of purple sugar cane. Such a feast for the eyes that it was some time before I noticed a disturbing fact. The market place, usually crowded with people, was that day completely deserted. I soon saw why that rich harvest had been left unattended. Slinking towards me, panga in hand, was an angry-looking Kikuyu with blood-shot eyes and particles of foam at the mouth. He walked past me, but not without viciously slashing at the side of my Land-Rover. With the aid of the police, and eagerly watched by all the inhabitants of the village, who kept, however, at a very safe distance, we cornered him in a deserted hut. In the police cell that night he tore his European clothes to shreds and stamped on them. It was an eloquent protest.

The happiest Africans I met in Kenya were not Assistant District Officers, qualified doctors, schoolmasters, and the like, but the savage, uncultured Askaris of the King's African Rifles whom the authorities have resisted all temptation to Europeanise. Put a native in a collar and tie and he seems suddenly to become dissatisfied, uncomfortable, conscious if you like of his peoples' wrongs; but give him three wooden boards on which to sleep, a smart uniform of khaki drill, a blanket, enough ground maize to keep him from going hungry and one shilling eighty a day with which to buy cigarettes or send home to his family, and he will rarely show a sign of discontent. The colour bar, which is more blatant in the army than in any other walk of life, far from being a bone of contention actually makes for contentment. The K.A.R. Askari is happy because he lives apart from his European superiors; because he speaks a different language, wears different clothes, and eats different food from the white man. It is enough for him that we are the mouthpiece of what is reverently called "Amri ya K.A.R." (the Order of the K.A.R.). On our part we respect the difference between the two races, the traditions and customs of his particular tribe; the fact that on pay day he might very well decide to draw all his credits, merely to help purchase a new wife. As long as the work in hand remains uncompromised, the Askaris are left to their own devices, to dance their own dances, to live their own accustomed lives. Only, like all officers, we try to satisfy

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their own needs before our own. Possibly that is the charm of serving with the K.A.R.; the needs of the men are so ridiculously simple; they are natural soldiers, having been carrying arms for the last few thousand years, and finally, once one gains their trust and confidence, they will follow almost anywhere.

I was once stationed at a chief's camp. His name was Marklus, and we christened him Marcus Brutus. Like most loyal Kikuyu he was very frightened, but even more relieved, to have the army about him and to be comfortably surrounded by barbed wire. The loyal Kikuyu he compared to a herd of goats, terrorised by the Mau Mau, suspected by the security forces. Yet every night these "goats" would come from miles around to sleep within the security of our camp. I wished that the critics of Kenya's war against the Mau Mau could have seen the look of pathetic hope in the faces of those nightly refugees. For us, it could not have been a clearer indication as to where our duty lay. They came from every walk of life; there were game scouts, ex-Askaris, D.C.'s clerks, one grey-haired old Catholic priest, a few, a very few courageous young men prepared to take the advice of their elders and have nothing to do with Mau Mau—all relying on us to defend them who were so defenceless. Those tired, frightened eyes seemed to say: "You saved us before from the Masai, the Nandi, the Kipsigis, defend us now from ourselves."

How could one let such an appeal go unanswered? They are human beings like ourselves, a point which the above-mentioned critics are not slow in making. In first coming to Kenya, we may have had other motives than that of protecting the Kikuyu. Now, however, we have made ourselves responsible for them.

In Nairobi, Nanyuki, or any other European township one can surround oneself with, so to speak, a white wall; have tea at half-past four, dinner at eight, shutting the eyes ostrich-like to the black face behind the bar and the black hands that serve one on every side. In fact there are Kenyans who have lived fifteen years in Nairobi and pride themselves on being unable to speak Kiswahili. But in the native reserve one must take account of the African. He is the centre of attraction. It is more important that he should be able to sit on his haunches sucking his fingers after that delicious goat chop, than that the European should snatch a few hours' sleep on a hard camp-bed. We are the intruders, they the masters. We cannot own land or remain in the Native Land Unit except in so far as we minister to the needs of the local natives. Living amongst them is like watching an aquarium full of fish, in the unfortunate position of being on the wrong side of the glass. The Kikuyu reserve is darkest Africa. As dark as it ever has been, and if Mau Mau has its way, as dark as it ever will be. Europeans there are enveloped in this darkness, like men in a house whose supply of electricity has suddenly failed; and they go on striking matches until eventually the box will be emptied. Wherever one looks there is disease, in spite of numerous hospitals, because the people are too superstitious to use them; there is ignorance in spite of many more schools than I ever saw for Europeans in the White Highlands, because the Mau Mau feel it their duty to burn down places of education; there is hunger in spite of the fact that the Kikuyu possess some of the most fertile country in Kenya, because of bad farming and suspicion of the agricultural department; and there is anarchy in spite of a large security force. But sometimes a light is brought in this impenetrable gloom, which seems all the brighter for its loneliness. One such is a certain missionary who said: "I am convinced that any man however savage or hostile will respond to love, faith, and above all Christ." From what I have seen in the Kikuyu, I have neither the faith nor the courage to believe this. The Mission worker does. He has no gun, no guard, no barbed wire, only an invincible faith. To be unarmed in the reserve is considered more than a sign of madness. He goes on shaking hands with his "brothers in Christ." How one prays that he will succeed where we poor soldiers have failed!

Weariness has a disturbing effect on the mind. We were on the last lap of a long, all-day operation in the forest. I was trudging slowly, and I must admit angrily, behind the leading scout when suddenly I heard two shots

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very loud and very close. The man in front shouted "There they are—*charge!*" and pandemonium was let loose. We charged with a vengeance; we charged to the front, to the left, to the right; we even wheeled round and charged to the rear; all to no avail. For there was nothing, not a footmark, not a broken grass stem only the "empty mocking thicket."

"Well," I asked the leading Scout, "well what in the name of Allah [he was a Mohammedan] happened?"

"I was walking along," he answered, "just in front of you, effendi, when I saw before me a crowd of Mau Mau all pointing their rifles at me. One of them fired a shot, I fired back, and they all disappeared like the wind."

"How far away were they?" I asked.

"About fifteen yards."

"On the track?"

"Yes."

My worst fears were realised. Two incontrovertible facts emerged from this short conversation. First, as my field of vision had extended at least twenty yards in front of the leading scout, I should have seen anyone standing on the track. Secondly, if the alleged Mau Mau had fired an alleged shot which missed the leading man, I had stood an excellent chance of being hit myself. Yet I had felt or seen nothing.

No, I am wrong, and this is where I was affected by tiredness, I could not swear on oath that I had in fact seen nothing or heard only those shots. Too much peering, too much listening in the dim forest full of grotesque shadows, and the sharp rustle of startled game, had made me uncertain of my own eyesight and hearing. Where I thought I had seen only the usual endless series of tall trees and low bush, the leading scout had clearly observed a group of men pointing guns at him led by "an oldish fellow, wearing a peaked cap armed with a double-barrelled shot gun." Either he had seen something where there was nothing, or I nothing where there was something. One of us was not to be trusted, the worst of it being that I was not absolutely certain which. In the end we found the empty shell cases close to where the leading scout had been standing, which proved that he had loosed off the shot which he was certain came from the Mau Mau.

"But what of the old man in the peaked cap?" asked a very perplexed Askari. Remembering the fatal words of the doctor to the woman who thought she had swallowed a fish bone, I answered: "He probably escaped into the forest. Take a steadier aim next time." I hastily checked a complacent smile, however, when I remembered that I too had nearly suffered from an hallucination.

I LEFT Kenya as I found it, dried up and blistered by the sun, waiting impatiently for the rains to break. Nairobi was crowded as ever with soldiers on leave, awaiting posting, transfer, or release. The Europeans were more resigned to the emergency, yet more determined to put an end to it at any cost. Africans were still fearful of both Mau Mau and Government. In Nairobi they steadfastly refused to travel by bus, Mau Mau having threatened with death any black man who ignored their boycott of the (European-run) Kenya bus service. The loyalists still sought the protection of the forces of law and order. The Kikuyu guard still unaccountably lost their ammunition. The army started a fire in the dry heathland, which glowed angrily above the forest for a whole week. At Entebbe the air strip was deep in mud. Everyone was jubilant. The rain would reach Nairobi within three days. The terrorists would die of malaria when it fell on the Aberdares and Mount Kenya. The same hope had been expressed in 1952, but we found no dead bodies or fever-stricken Kikuyu.

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Sybille Bedford

The Anchor and the Balloon

Notes and a Diary in Switzerland

SATURDAY, August 1st. Morning. Stepped off the train, still trailing a little sand, by the door swung shut last night on the platform at Cannes, funnelled through the passage of the double customs—*Douane Française*, other colours, a common language, a different design of caps, *Douane Suisse*—followed the unhurried porter's trolley to the cloak-room down the kiosked hall and walked, free for a space of hours between a choice of trains, into the spacious sparkling luxurious town, pouring with light, ablaze with water, snow-lit above the summer blue: Quai des Saules, Pont du Rhône, Pont de l'Isle, Quai des Bergues—the Lake of Geneva, wide-shored and open. Sails; the Jardin Anglais, full of tidy people on the benches; and there, the Jet d'Eau, slenderest fountain shaft, white comet of water, self-flung into the sky.

Hôtel Metropole, well kept in gilt and awnings; wide crossings intricately marked, elaborate signals. Place Bel-Air, rue de la Corraterie. Large-fronted banks, slow passage of lustrous motor-cars bearing Egyptian and Bolivian licence plates, very wide shop windows displaying the single salmon on his block of ice, the one bolt of silk; fruiterers' windows with liqueur whisky, sherry, satin-ribboned corbeilles of tiered pineapple and grape; windows lettered *couture* with nothing in them except a small cut-glass bottle of Chanel scent, and the discreetly wire-veined windows of L'HORLOGERIE-BIJOUTERIE.

> . . . Fifty steps inland, and all is changed. An older, smaller, rooted world. The roofs are lower and the façades more simple. Dazzle and vision of the lake and mountains above the lake are closed out; there are plane trees in the square, and a little shade, print-shops, flower-stalls, cafés; women walk by with bread; the Metropolitan Spa is a quarter in a provincial town.

And so on and up, standing, drifting, pushing on, purposeful and aimless, slipshod and concentrated, hurried and leisured, in the manner of the traveller who has neither obligations nor itinerary, who wants to take in all but knows he will not sleep in the town, and whose north is not even the hotel but the railway station. One sentence, read the week before in a recent book on Switzerland, had struck, "As we pause in the Bourg-du-Four to buy duck's

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eggs. . . ." Duck's eggs, Bourg-du-Four, wherever that might be—how de-delightful, how provident, how pretty! And who were they who paused and walked on, not with a card and a postage stamp but a live smooth egg in a fragile pale-green shell? Perhaps the conjuration does not work in August, for I did not find them; perhaps its place in the empty crooked square was taken by the shop of the Chinese merchant, Descendant and Successor, the sign proclaimed, of one L. Tschin-Ta-Ni, Fils Céleste, who set up in this very spot in 1779, and where then under the picture of a Dock-Road Chinaman, in a penumbra of canisters and an atmosphere of Holmesian *sous-entendu* belied by transparent neatness, I had myself weighed an ounce of Goût des Caravanes by a Swiss tradesman with Mongolian eyes, seized by a strong sense of being present in some double exposure of time.

"*Excusez-moi, Madame, c'est bien la Société des Nations?*"

"*Point, Madame. C'est un Musée d'Art.*"

"*Ah, et qu'est-ce qu'il y a dedans?*"

"*Des bureaux.*"

. . . "*Pardon—le Musée Rath?*"

. . . "*Le Palais des Nations.*"

. . . "*C'est occupé?*"

. . . "*Je crois qu'on y ait mis des tableaux.*"

TIME UP. Brief broiling journey in the trough of the afternoon. In our roomy carriage the blinds are down; the impeccable motorised train only hums; it is dark, hot, static, like a farm-house parlour, yet one is alive to motion and progress through brilliance without. Rolle; Ouchy; Vevey; the train veers north: one last flash, stabbing bright, of Léman, Mont Blanc, the vineyards, grey stone châteaux and fat-leafed slopes of the Pays de Vaud. Now the green is lighter, the leaves less lush, the trees less high—sweet pasture country, softly moulded, orchards, fir-trees, cuckoo-clock houses, village spires; the cows have bells. Picture-book Switzerland.

I looked at it with reserve.

. . . Dudigen. Wünewill. Oberwangen.

Of course—they're going to speak German.

. . . The light is softer now. Another long valley. And now we cross a bridge. It is the Aar. Look—how snug, how horseshoe-fitted in its river loop, lies the City of Berne, how small, how held!

We stop and I walked into a hand-made, child-sized dream.

. . . No? this person in armour and the pink gloves on the fountain is a *bear*. And here, on another, is a belted lion in azure, gold-laced boots and his cloak piped with scarlet, sword in paw, lifting a trusting muzzle to the plumed Good Duke; and on this emerald and crimson pillar sits a man in splendid wooden clothes playing bagpipe to a goose, and everything is spouting water and geraniums, and the clock-faces are painted too, and as large as cart-wheels, and so many of them, and there are doves and hares and princes to strike out the hours, and

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everything is picked out in gold and scarlet, and there are thick-blooming flower pots everywhere, in all the windows, and the streets *are* arcades, all the streets, as far as eye can see and foot does carry, and here is a whole square spread with fruit, far into the evening, nectarines, apricots, melons, and wild berries, and everybody strolls or sits or is selling honey-cake or scout-knives, and everybody is friendly to everybody, and *what* they speak sounds so extravagantly homely that it dwindles to harmless absurdity, and nothing, nowhere, is ugly or big or grubby or chic or new.

In this I moved for an hour in an eye-rubbing daze. Then my next fast Swiss train streaked towards Lucerne in a long twilight. The question where to stay obtruded then. It was late; a music festival was opening that day; summer is not favourable to somnambulant free-wheeling.

. . . 11 P.M. Found clean feather-bed in someone's suburban home by help of public lodging bureau. A chit with an address and the number of the tram. Got there, what's more. Tiptoed with woman in night-gown; no papers asked, no money down, the latchkey held out like a lump of sugar; won't speak German (yet). Now in *Gasthaus*, men at cards, eating *Restaurations-Teller*, "Salad?" "*Ja, ja, salat*," but it is unmitigated meat. Presently I shall let myself into the house of strangers sleeping. A place in the world. But all v. free and anonymous.

THE next day, early, I took a paddle steamer down the lake to a small resort.

. . . Mid-trunk on the pollarded chestnut trees in the garden by the lake where the schoolmaster and the comfortable lady on the dais are playing Grieg on an upright and a fiddle, and the summer guests and villagers are sitting under leaves and sky in an after-dinner haze while the service daughters stagger by with *kirsch* and beer, and the lake is rippling and the night clear, the music earnest and hypnotic and the little coloured bulbs glow mildly like strings of insect beads and time is gliding and enjoyment placid and diffuse, mid-trunk on the bark, below the buoyant crowns, there is a circle of bright metal clothes-hooks. From them dangle mackintoshes, leather jackets, summer wraps. And in this garden of middle-age and innocence the eye strays to that Swiss skeleton as disturbed as by the supplicants outside the sunny palace in the plaza.

At midnight when the coats are gone from their indigenous racks and the violin has been bedded in its well-worn case, we examine the trees. It is all right! The hooks are held by an invisible leather brace. The inside of the leather is padded. The bark is not even bruised. We look at each other—how ingenious, how useful, how harmless, how neat. And how housewifely. Like those French crockery-shops that call themselves *à l'Agréable et Utile*. But, but . . . "You know I don't know what to think of that," says Mr. Smith. Nor, really, do I.

Mr. Smith was an hotel acquaintance.

. . . The staff is always smiling. "*Gern*." "With pleasure." "*Zum*

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wohl." "*Volontiers.*" "*Subito!*" "At once." "Please?" "No thank you—*le service est compris.*" "*Bitte,* Please, *Grazie, Merci,* Thank you." Why?

We had spoken first outside the carved Kodak and news shop, waiting for the boat with the papers to come in, but their names I only learned later on from the register. Mr. Smith *mit Gemahlin und Tochter.* I don't know how they like this, but that's the way it is. The entry plainly conveys what it means—Mr. Smith with womenfolk. Herr Camenzind, the manager, strolls through the lounge in a black coat, silk tie, and polished boots. Everybody calls him *Monsieur le Directeur.* His glasses have a thin gold rim and he has well-kept hands. His wife wears an apron and her identity among the service daughters behind the cake and coffee counter is not generally revealed. Herr Camenzind imparts facts, figures, and opinions to the Belgian businessman across the room. The very information I am anxious to acquire. Wages . . . Enough to live on? Well, *yes.* Electrification? Pretty general . . . On the farms, for house-work . . . For working people? Everybody works . . . Oh factory workers? Yes, naturally . . . Yes, nice homes . . . A few very large fortunes, not many . . . At Geneva mostly and Zürich. Why, invest it . . . At home? Yes. Hospitals, museums . . . Taxes? Pay them? Certainly . . . The old? The old have had time to put something by . . . There's things you can do in summer, and others you do in winter . . . My neighbour now, the one who has the Crown Inn, he's clerk of Weights and Measures, and Secretary to the Municipal Council—of course that's not paid—and he works at a saw-mill . . . You can't sit in a chair all the time. Oh I'm a *hôtelier de métier* . . . Unemployment? We have to have people in from outside each year to help with the unskilled jobs . . . Start work early? No . . . the boys have to get their training, for what they want to be; one's got to think of the future. *All* the boys? On the whole . . . Find a job waiting? Why yes—that's what they're learning for.

Yes. Not really a rich country . . . Much of the land unproductive, got to import food, not many raw materials. Exports—precision instruments: very well; but who needs precision instruments *ad infinitum*? or can always afford chocolate and cheese . . . We *have* our problems.

"Not being alone on the planet?"

Army at nineteen . . . training every year . . . For life . . . During the war there wasn't an hour when everything wasn't ready for blowing up the roads and tunnels and half the country with them. Beggared us? Changed our lives for twenty, thirty, fifty years.

"You have had the devil's own luck," said the Belgian.

"Yes—luck. With the passes up we shouldn't have been much use to anybody wanting to get through: pity, you and the Dutch and the English aren't so well placed."

But to me Herr Camenzind only says, "Yes it is a fine day. Yes, in winter it is not so fine. Colder, yes. Yes the war. Hard, yes." Of course the women do not vote in the Confederation. Everybody seems just as pleased.

> . . . Hopscotch on the paddle-steamers—those paddle-steamers so like tall mock swans, so white and high, so slow, so calm, so majestic: so crowded—across and back and aslant the lake to the places one

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might have, but did not stay in. There are thirty-six village resorts, not counting Queen Victoria's Brunnen which is almost a town, on Lac Quatre-Cantons, the Vierwaldstaettersee, the Lake of Lucerne. All look alike. Landing-stage and promenade on the shore; the one stone building, the Big Hotel, 19th century, heavily verandaed, well to the front, flanked by confectioners, kiosks and a spruce little post office flying the Swiss flag on a square of lawn; behind, the gabled inns, *Gasthaus zur Krone, zum Schwert, zum Schwan*, and the *Pension Beaurivage*; the village street and two general stores with soup advertisements in their windows, more confectioners, a beef and sausage butcher's tiled and chromiumed like a bath in *Vogue*, a cobbler, a master harness-maker and two ironmongers, one dairy and a seamstress' sign; a lane, an opening and the wooden white-washed church with pitched roof and bulbous tower, behind the graveyard; then up and out, past the great propped plum-tree, over the foot-bridge and the stream, at once alone, up through meadows, through the stile, up through noon and sudden shade, up into sharper sun and finer air, up the gently rising mountain-side.

. . . Woke and said to myself aloud, How nice. But it is *nice*. The girl came in with the tray and I returned the smile. She smiled back. Something clicked and it was as though after some long disturbance binocular vision had been restored.

WHEN I had walked once, I walked every day. Three hours, five, seven, ten. It was like a new grace. Coming out of the hotel in the morning with five francs in my pocket and a stick and starting up a slope, or seeing the ferry or a boat bound down-lake and catching that and beginning from another valley. Sometimes I planned a day—could one, could I, walk over the pass and down to Immensee and bathe in the Lake of Zoug? Was it possible to get to Schwyz across the Scheidegg and back again through the fields? I collected maps, thought out things to take; nothing to encumber only to free more. This was no mountaineering; I never went anywhere I could not lose myself, bumbling along absentmindedly on rope-soled shoes. What did one need? Nature in Switzerland is not extreme, not in summer, not below six thousand feet; the freedom here is freedom also from the pioneer's domestic cares. There's many a discreet amenity—a hut, a shelter on the summit, a refuge, an inn, where one could eat and sleep and have one's ankle set. A jersey then, and a torch and knife, and a light satchel to hold them and the food; dry compact clean food only, very hard black bread, hard cheese, and a long hard black smoked sausage, smooth like a thin cigar, and for pleasure an aluminium flask to fill at stops with spring-water and wine. A twenty-franc note on second thought rather than a five; paper, a pencil; an apple one could count on finding on the way. I never took a book.

I met few people, except those whose business it was to be about—haymakers in the distance: they were cutting the third hay, a short crop but thick and sweet with herbs and clover; men working the pulleys of a milk lift on an upper slope—but I was seldom out of sight of a cow. The cows of the Four

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Cantons are fawn-coloured, not large, with short horns and unalarmed dark eyes set beautifully in the creamy markings of their faces, and they potter about all day long *où le cœur leur en dise*, eating good grass, leading the best of cows' lives. To keep them from falling over the precipices the Swiss with unflinching practicalness apply the sensible corrective touch to nature by stringing wires with a feeble electric charge across panorama and promontory. Those wires are almost invisible; I've stumbled against them myself and am glad to say that the shock would be felt only as a gentle warning even by a calf. I often lost my way. Once I got soaked in a storm, went on and came to a house where they lent me a clean garment to sit in. The countryside as usual had been empty, but like Alice's pool the parlour filled at once with all kinds of dripping people and their boots and dogs. The windows were shut tight against the rain, and there we waited in a smell of wet leather, plum brandy and soup. When it cleared the front-door flung open, the men looked up on the threshold and stamped their feet before going out, there were shouts of *Adieu* and *Vergelt's Gott* and, before my own things had come back from the oven, they were all absorbed again into the landscape. Once it was night before I reached a town and valley; a fast electric train took me to the junction on the lake; Gersau was still miles and the last boat had gone, but I found that I could hire without fuss a well-oiled bicycle at the station.

My diary entries for that time, scrawled with a heavy hand after my wolfish returns, are short and almost incoherent with sleepiness, self-satisfaction, and ecstasy.

The weather of this long, quiescent summer had set at last in full and rare perfection. The granted, still, hot days were of a luminous blueness so light and fine, so present, that oneself moving in it, felt melted into slow vitrescence. And sometimes from a height one was confronted by yet another blueness—a glimpse of bay below, a rock-set hyaline circlet, suspended lapis lazuli and air, flashing upward light as though a fabled grotto had opened to the sky. Sometimes, woods and silence occluded sparkle and the droning noon; sometimes all was space and form. Once I walked all day along a curving ridge that followed but seemed to design the outline of an open plain. Once I ate my lunch in a brook.

What was this magic? The beginning each day the same: the cold, slow, sluggish start with unthawed limbs and disjointed casting mind; the first hour the longest; the first stretch of climb a dull effort. Then came a warming, a change of rhythm, a switch to another strength, and one was in—swinging along at ease, fused in body and motion and mind, in the air, in the sun, the grass, breathing the green and brooks and hay, swinging in the sound of scythe and water, swinging along alone, happiness welling in the heart, happiness made known in a flight of unspoken words, walking, swinging, in a long moment of infinite content: timeless, soothed, alive.

Then came some breaks, but they sustained the mood.

> . . . Zürich for the day. How nice the trains are, how clean. Such pleasure to lean out of the window, opened by twirling a light handle, and watch them put the milk and crates into the van. All done so neatly, on such a man-sized scale. Sometimes the guard takes off his coat and gives a hand. And all *smooth*, never breathless or wasteful; no

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waiting. I walked down the Bahnhofstrasse in midday heat under trees and awnings—a solid mile of Good Shops. Zürich is the largest town in Switzerland and one cannot say that this street is not urban—plate-glass, streams of people and traffic, stoniest Haussmann fronts, and very ugly. Yet there is also a sense of spaciousness and enjoyed prosperity, and nobody looks quite pressed, and it is such a fine day; the trees give shade and the awnings look bright and cool; besides 19th century ugliness has lost much of its power these days. The things in the shops make one wish to set up house. This coffee-machine will work; this paint-job is going to last; this tool-box looks a dream. And now the street has come to an end—we stand on a quay by a bridge over a widening river before another lake alive with a hundred small white sails, row-boats bobbing for hire, and, beyond the shores and streets and dwindling villas, rises a hillside of orchards and, above, a double range of mountains ending, blue and white once more, in snow and sky, and again it is intense clear open summer, fanned by a little wind.

And there are two rivers running through the town and that means water-fronts and water gear, uneven houses with cellar shops and protruding upper storeys, steps and alleys. And across the Limat there is a cobbled and timbered quarter, odds and lengths of streets, and squares leading any which-way, and old wine-rooms with the date painted carefully over the door. I ate shavings of dried smoked beef and drank wine in a shuttered wainscotted tap-room with a Swiss family tucking in a large noiseless lunch, a place one could hear the flies buzz. And then off and all over the town, in the heat, over bridges, checked in squares, chasing the best thermos flask there ever was from glittering sports-shop to sports-shop, now stopping to look at the new flats going up, now for a distrustful look at the milk-bar, now in and out of Zwingli's very late Gothic Minster, chilled and halted by finding it as Protestant churches always surprise me by being so *filled* with varnished pews; now standing to read the play-bill: Shakespeare, Anouilh, Schiller, Shaw; now in a book-shop, now in another, picking up a pocket Montaigne—such good print—for half a franc; then finding the *Kunsthaus* and in it, shockingly hung on a staircase in bad light, a long-sought Claude Monet, the *Déjeuner dans le Bois*, also other treasures: the Man with the Umbrella coming down a tunnel of leaves, Apollinaire with his striped cat at his arm done by Douanier Rousseau and two or three of those tiny Renoir landscapes that give one always such a shock of pleasure; Fusellis by the yard and walls of Picasso, and Expressionist Germans, protesting, twisted stuff, composed in an ugly mood; no Klee; what else? but time is up, they're closing. "*So* late," the woman at the entrance had said; "I'm going to mark your ticket so that you can come again tomorrow without paying." I shall not be here tomorrow, but did not like to say so; now going out I looked at her again and thought of how much of this there must have been behind the Impressionists, and how little of it behind contemporary painting. And how splendid of the Swiss, how Voltairean, to collect and show it all.

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Who goes to these galleries? Who subscribes to the repertory and opera, and hires the sail-boats and buys the cook-stoves and good shoes? The inhabitants of Zürich of course. About a million of them now. And they work in factories and offices, use transport and live in residential suburbs on the lake-shore. For Zürich *is* a modern industrial town. But how mitigated! The factories do not smoke. There are no slums. Nothing is really far. The town offers the scope of urban pleasures of London, Paris, and New York, with less effort, less unbalance, and without the cost in health and nerves. In Zürich, one is aware of the lake at every point and the mountains can surely be seen from almost any window. It is not an ideal place, but it is still a good one, and in it no man or woman need live, no child grow up, outside the bounds of nature.

Then I went and sat in the Café Odeon, that old haven of Zürich where in cool dimness on worn leather in an atmosphere at once philistine and literary one can read the newspapers of six countries and sit browsing all day over a cup of coffee, and thought of first causes and of wisdom and accident and planning, of the mess and the lateness, luck and folly, and with sadness of England and with impatience of America, and of the irrevocable duty of casting always, always, the bread of humanism upon the waters.

. . . Into Lucerne to hear Mozart played in the open-air night across a small cold pond. It was pitch dark, and music and musicians came curiously distorted over the intervening water. The strings, now muted, now carried, floated thin; conductor and violins were reflected, enormously agitated, tail-coated paper frogs, head downward on the wavering surface. Was there an echo? The whole quite unreal; lovely; though perhaps too charged with romanticism. Certainly for Mozart, who does not need this setting. Emerged trance-like and was glad to find, at eleven o'clock, the friendly animation of the town. Sat by the river and drank some wine, and watched the city swans.

Returned on the boat next morning, and found a new ease among the old guard. "*Ça sent la fin de saison*," said the head-waiter. Herr Camenzind is in the wine-room with the Padre and a bright industrialist from Lille. I am now admitted to these colloquies, at least as a listener.

"We *are* our government," says Herr Camenzind.

The country is still small enough, he says—four and a half million—to be a graspable community. The Cantons and the Boroughs are largely autonomous and run by the inhabitants; pretty nearly everybody knows what he's voting for and how it's going to be carried out and by whom. As to the Federal Government, any measure, on thirty thousand signatures, is put to the general question.

"On paper?"

No, says Herr Camenzind, there's a Referendum every other week; and explains also the Initiative, a provision by which a man, any man, with the proper number of signatures can propose a bill to the Assembly.

"Guillaume Tell."

Not at all, says Herr Camenzind. A recent amendment. 1874.

"What's your President like?"

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"Padre . . .?" says Herr Camenzind.

"On the tip of my tongue . . ." says the Padre.

"Don't you know his name?" says the Frenchman.

"He's just been changed."

"Ah!"

"He is every year."

"God help you," says the Frenchman.

"Not elections," says the Padre. "Council members take turns. Isn't that right?"

"That's right," says Herr Camenzind.

WHEN at the end of a month of this my meteoric and impatient friend, Martha G., arrived—for three days, "I could make it four," from Jugoslavia on her way to London, Israel, and Rome—I was as well as pleased, dismayed. I did not want to be prised from my lair of discovered joys. I wished indeed to share my store with Martha, but would she see it so? Martha, in a heroic mood, a thousand miles forced drives straight from Ragusa, with the bronze of an untouched and beautiful country and a people brave as lions still upon her? Martha, who would as soon burn her boats as look at them two times? She seldom has to; and I need not have feared. Twenty-five minutes after she and her small, neatly loaded motor-car had crossed the border, she had seized all. "My dear," she said on the telephone (Martha rings up across countries), "but how clean, how cheap, how honest; how innocent, how comical, how *kind*! Why didn't we always come here?"

"M.," said I, "I have been up the Rigi."

"Good," said Martha. "I want to see all these mountains, I want to see everything. Can we get to St. Gall and the Engadine and to Bâle, and do you think the Grisons? Can we be off at eight tomorrow? Have you been to many doctors? This *is* the place. And we must do all the passes, I did the Bernina and the Splügen this morning, I love them; and I want to see the Rhône glacier."

"I went on foot."

"*Listen*: where *is* Gersau? Kraut-Swiss, isn't it? Never mind—be with you at five. Lay on a room. I must get some sleep, and perhaps I'd better eat, I forget when I ate last. I want to gorge on all those delectable *schübblis* and *pasties* and *wienerlis* . . ."

"*Zwischenverpflegung*."

"What's that?"

"In-between-meals taking-care-of."

"Oh darling—*bliss*!"

She was there at four. And in the morning we were off on a swift light journey.

. . . Lucerne before the shops opened . . .

"A lake in every town," said Martha, "I do call that stylish."

"It is rather a geological speciality of these parts."

"Any sights?"

"We'll walk around and get them by osmosis."

"I didn't know Medieval could be *white*-washed. A brilliant idea. And I

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approve of a lot of little squares, don't you? Why is one told Lucerne is pompous?"

"Not this part."

"And look at those children's fountains!"

"Wait," said I, "till you see Berne."

"Now that's the kind of luggage I like, unpretentious, sensible, neat. I must get everything I possess repaired."

"One can send one's bags through the post office."

"*No?* We must. Oh look. Look . . ." Across the road two wax young ladies, one dressed in white tulle, one in pink, were obliging in a store window on an Erard grand. The music open on the stand was a Wolf song; a fire glowed in the grate. On a settee two suitably gowned matrons and a gentleman in a dinner-jacket were listening with gestures of fixed rapture. An old lady had folded her hands over the sewing in her lap and the master of this apartment had dropped his newspapers. The pink tulle was 87.50. "How much is that in dollars?" said Martha. "You know I believe one could marry their decorators."

"I'm sure these are going to be the most divinely comfortable things ever I stepped in but you wouldn't have a pair that doesn't *show* it quite so much?"

"Madame wishes walking-shoes or social-shoes?" said the shop-assistant.

"Walking, I suppose," said Martha. "But perhaps looking just a tiny bit social?"

"Perhaps Madame is thinking of a street-shoe?"

"Oh I could hug them," said Martha.

"Now I must look for a long time at these watches; we can't afford not to buy everything we see. Now, *why* aren't I done in?"

"We have it all to ourselves," said I.

Streamers, strung from thatch to gable, read,

MOTORISTS, PLEASE STOP YOUR CARS OR DRIVE ROUND
LEAVE THE INNER TOWN TO THE ENJOYMENT OF THE PEDESTRIANS

"Of *course*," said Martha. "Room."

We had elevenses at the Bellevue & Balances on the strip of terrace by the river, flush with the water, where it is almost still and widens towards the lake; and we fed the swans.

"Grand Canal."

"Better," said Martha.

"Now, now," said I.

"Let's shove," said Martha.

We shoved. Along the Alpnacher See to Sarnen; to Sachseln, to Giswil, to Meiringen, up the Handegg and down into Brigue; to Visp, to Sierre, to Sion, to Martigny, past Aigle, past Chillon, through Montreux, Vevey, Lausanne, to Yverdon, to Neuchâtel, to Murten, to Fribourg, to Berne; we shoved over the Brünig and the Grimsel, into the South, along the Rhône, through the Valais, struck west into the Vaudois skirting Léman, and up into the Jura and the borders of France; we shoved through the Gruyère Valley and the Bernese Oberland—*Glissez, mortels, n'appuyez pas*—through floating space and grim altitudes and mild pasture country, through cicada country

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and bare-baked hills, through lanes and orchards, through woods scented by stacks of fresh-sawed logs and through fields one would have liked to cover with a hand; we saw pine-dark rock never touched by sun and blanched terraced slopes, grey stone and tawny stone and honey-coloured walls; we saw barns and chalets, scrubbed village baroque and story-book castles and the elegant lines of residential Louis-Seize, and at the foot of the Simplon we saw sprung an ochre Italianate arch.

"Can this be 20th century travel?" said Martha.

At Sarnen we fell for a manor with chevron'd shutters painted white and crimson. "This is the place," said Martha. "So pretty, so soothing; and think how one would work. Though what about *l'heure bleue*?"

"There's always a retired major with a collection of Monteverdi records," said I.

"Would he *talk*?" said Martha.

At Sachseln we looked at Brother Klaus the Hermit Saint of Unterwalden embalmed in silver armour in the parish church, and wandered about the graveyard among rows of crosses of generations of Zinsalpers and Geishofers. *Hier ruht in Gott* . . . "It must have been so bad for them," said Martha.

"Not incest," said I. "Feudalism. Same seigneur."

"So unlikely here."

On the Brünig we talked ourselves up eight thousand feet—"Do remind me some time that I'm driving," said Martha—over a road rising gently through soft woods, and when we stopped on mid-pass it was winter. We ate ham, trout, rye bread and apples in a pitch-pine inn with a boiling stove and drank two kinds of white wine and spread our maps and books and spelt out the proverbs on the walls. Then the pass meant business—a stark unending road climbing, turn above looping turn, into an eminence and yet another eminence of sheer stone, stone on top of one, stone at arm's reach, stone rising; a vastness of stone stretching to grey horizons; and there we were, adhering to the bends with a kind of insane precision, swishing about the edges of the world inside a mechanical mouse.

"So good for one," said Martha. "You know: the spirit."

"I'm not Emily Brontë," said I.

Martha blew out her nostrils. "I love the mountains."

"A nice hill," said I. "With two cypresses."

"This makes art look small."

"I like it small," said I. "And please may this stop."

It went on. Space expanded; stone rose beyond sea of stone; the serpentine road unwound nine lives. "I admit it is getting rather uncosy," said Martha.

"I am quaking."

"It does make one quake," said Martha, delighted.

And then we saw the hotel on top. Not a refuge, not a hostel, an hotel-sized hotel. "God bless their hopeful hearts," said Martha, "whom do you think they had in mind for this pleasure-dome?"

"You and King Lear," said I.

Down in Brigue the air was mild. Petrol station and lavatory were clean enough but not *sparkling*. "Not up to standard," said Martha. "Cisalpine." And then we walked under the arcades of a most civilised palazzo.

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At Sion we pulled up as they were saying compline in the darkening church, and sat for a while under the vaulting, the vestments gleaming in the fading light, the voices rising from the choir stalls. *Orate pro nobis.* . . . This Romanesque church of Sion is most beautiful, and so is the setting of the town in the vineyards and austere hills of the Valais, "the rainless apricot country between Sion and Sierre"; and the town too has beauty, perhaps magic, but it is also —what?—a shade desolate? transitional? run thin? Crummy, Martha said, but no—strayed rather, of two climates, astride like the Rhône towns above Orange, disturbing with intimations. We drank Fendant de Sion, the live pale green delicious wine of the country and that night I walked alone in the vineyards above the town and the ruined tower under a cloud-chased moon, stumbling and transported, grazed by twig and leaves, holding the grapes, crushing the berries sulphurous sweet into my mouth. And in the morning we slid off, glad to be gone, glad to be moving, into the scrub and polish and simplicity of Swiss Switzerland.

At Bex crouched a castle large and innocent with turrets and chromatic tiles. A small, long-faced, spectacled little boy informed us in an *incroyable* accent how to get to this Châ-teau, and we tried neither to laugh nor cry.

"Safe again," said Martha.

At noon Lake Léman and the Dents du Midi blazed before us.

"*Can* this be Chillon?" said Martha; "it's become so small."

At Lausanne we recognised nothing. A town, packed and unjelled; brick dust, gaps, people and new buildings. I asked for the Hotel Gibbon. But the Hotel Gibbon is no more.

"*Vous avez toujours le Lord Byron près de la gare.*"

"French Swiss isn't the answer either," said Martha.

But at Yverdon the sun lay on the square like butter; at Morat we saw another manor with striped armorial blinds; and Neuchâtel was all clean provincial beauty, 18th century and 17th century, long-warmed walls, apricot and honey, purring in afternoon calm. We picked up some fruit and washed it in a fountain and sat by another, and ate and talked and strolled and looked into people's windows and wrote postcards.

"What a genius they have," said Martha, "for the small change of freedom."

At Payerne something dropped out of the engine of the car, the man said it would be mended by a quarter to five, and it was. "Why does it all feel like a balloon outing, when it's really so solid?" said Martha.

"The happy ground crew."

At Bulle an office building displayed the advertisement of an insurance company. Under the legend, THE RISKS OF LIFE, could be seen the exposed cross-section of a house: in the living-room the master was standing on a step-ladder driving in a nail; in the kitchen his wife was handling an electric iron and the maid was peeling potatoes with a knife; a boy was sliding down the banisters in the hall, and on the hearth-rug a tot was playing with some matches. On the window-sill stood a flower-pot and next to these geraniums sat a cat; the cat, at any moment, might tumble this ornament upon a passer-by.

"Let us tiptoe away," said Martha.

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But it was at Fribourg, workaday, busy, sprawling, topographically unsewn, centre of a flourishing agricultural region and seat of Catholic learning, that we struck a main spring of the milk of kindness. Every interchange was informed by kindly concern, *par une grande gentillesse* (in Fribourg French and German are fused), people smiled with their eyes, and existence flowed, transported, over this bed-rock of goodwill.

"*In our frightful age*," said Martha. "Oh my dear."

And on the third day, in the morning, we got to Berne. "I believe in it now," I said. "Entirely."

And there it was, in the sun; a general market spread through the arcades; and there was the black, gloved Bear and there was the golden Lion, "Look at his dagger," "Look at his spurs," and water in all the fountains and flowers in all the windows, "Oh may life be like this," and there, rock-crystal green, swirling and seething, straight and wide, was the Aar, dashing itself through the town in an extravagance of foam and speed, and whisked past in it with their laughter the heads of bathing men and boys and women.

"Shall we . . .? Can we . . .? Shall we . . .?"

We have just flung ourselves into the Aar. Four times. Such a glow. First I did not think I'd have the nerve, then did, then again, four times. Now we are laughing all over—sitting on the grass in the sun in wet bathing suits in the people's Free Bath. Chestnuts and lime trees, clerks and typists in their luncheon hour, soldiers and girls and elderly people, a living *Grande Jatte*, playing draughts, playing ball, reading, eating hard-boiled eggs and sandwiches from the marquee, drinking things through a straw, resting from their glory. . . . It is a happy way of bathing, the most exhilarating I know. First one strolls up the towpath, two hundred yards, three hundred, half a mile—in the middle of the capital, at noon—then comes the long moment of almost blind decision, then the incredible icy suck and churn and stunned immediate action when one must strike at once from the hurling waters of the bank and gain the smooth-flowing sunny centre, then the rapid, breath-snatching downstream whirl in the clear racing water redolent of moss and snow and mountain mirth, flashed past shore, roofs, willows towards an alpine outline, and then it's time—the sluice approaches—to strike hard once more towards the bank and grasp a passing rail . . . one's missed the second, the third is whisking by and here's another: the last . . . feet thrash, knees graze, an arm shoots out —safe.

"Again?"

"Again."

"Oh look——"

THE UNUSEFUL CRYING IN THE AAR SHOULD BE REFRAINED FROM

"Glorious," said Martha. "But think if it were the Germans who'd dared put up this sign."

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Raymond Aron

Asia—Between Malthus and Marx

IF it is true that ten years ago the West did not understand the Communists, did not take seriously their messianic aggressiveness, it is also true that today it sometimes gives the impression of wanting to understand the Communists better than the Communists understand themselves. The Communists, at least in public, feel it necessary to give to events an interpretation compatible with their ideology. But during recent decades there has been an ever-widening gap between the ideology and the event, between Marxist theories and reality. It is obvious, in retrospect, that the Russian Revolution of 1917 was nothing like that uprising of the Proletariat against Capitalism which Marx dreamed of as the supreme moment in human history. And the "revolutions from above" which prepared the way for Russian occupation of Eastern Europe cannot be assimilated to the vision of the self-destruction of the capitalist system, victim of its own contradictions.

While the West is well aware of this divergence, it has nevertheless developed on its own a sophisticated pseudo-Marxist theory of the political destiny of the under-developed countries. This theory, though unacceptable to the pure Stalinist, presents the Communist case far better than the Communists themselves ever could. It does not quite provide the equivalent of Historical Necessity, but it comprises three elements which together suggest the probability of the under-developed countries moving willy-nilly in the Communist direction.

First, it emphasises the circumstances supposedly favourable to this type of evolution: over-population in rural areas, survival of an agrarian régime hated by the peasants, poverty in the new urban areas, disintegration of the old social order under the pressure of war, etc. Secondly, it attributes the leading political role to a single Party, its general staff recruited from the intellectuals, its leaders and militants the professionals of political action. (In practice, this invariably seems to mean the Communist Party.) Lastly, it asserts that such a régime as a "peoples' democracy," however terrible its methods, has the merit of accomplishing one essential task; the industrialisation of the backward country. The Party substitutes itself for the non-existent private entrepreneurs; collective savings, imposed by the State, make up for the lack of private savings; the Party's discipline and fanatical ideology create an élite adapted to the needs of an industrial society.

Practically all those who like to think of themselves as being in the "progressive camp" accept this sociological theory, according to which Communism offers a kind of substitute for capitalism as an agent of economic development, avoiding the domination by colonial powers which may be the result of relying upon foreign capital.

ONE often hears of "the vicious circle of poverty." The under-developed countries are too poor to be able to save. Without savings how can they invest? Without large-scale

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investments, how can they cease being poor? Economic progress demands that the quantity of goods produced each year should increase more quickly than the population, and that the increment of production should not be consumed entirely, but should be used to increase the volume of investments. This requires the diversion of surplus manpower from agriculture into industry, with agricultural output maintained while rural workers find productive employment in the towns.

In theory, a Soviet régime appears especially suited to fill the various conditions indispensable for economic progress. The initial phase of industrialisation does not pass without attacks against vested interests, or without violence done to customs and rights. The Communist State is strong enough to raise a considerable amount of savings, even against the will of the population. Public savings are enforced on the peasants by the low prices paid by the State for their produce, and on the workers by the turnover tax, which creates a wide gap between the price paid the farmer and the selling price to the urban population. The decision to invest which, in a free economy, depends on the mood and fortunes of a minority of individuals, will in a Communist State be made resolutely by the Party Leaders, put into execution by the public administration, and imposed on the masses by activists and propagandists. Thus, the construction of industry becomes the common task of the rulers and the ruled; the Party ideology spreads from one to the other, bringing with it a collective discipline conforming to the needs of an industrial society.

But it is worth asking: is the Soviet method really valuable as an example for Asia? It will be remembered that Tsarist Russia, during the twenty years immediately preceding the First World War, managed to escape—with the help of foreign capital, it is true, but without succumbing to "colonialism"—from the "vicious circle" of under-development. During the 19th century, in all probability, the pressure of population on the land in Russia increased. But between 1896 and 1913, the harvested crop increased by 38 per cent, that is, more quickly than the number of mouths to be fed (which rose from 127 million to 167 million in that period). The national income rose by 39·4 per cent between 1900 and 1913, and as the population between these same dates increased by 19·1 per cent there remained an advance of real income per head of about 17·1 per cent. Nothing proves that Soviet techniques were indispensable for economic progress in Russia itself. Russia was by no means a prisoner of the "vicious circle of poverty."

Have Soviet techniques given conclusive results in the Soviet Union? Beyond question, the building up of heavy industry has been impressive. But if one considers the relation between means of subsistence and population, the results are less satisfactory. One primary fact is certain, for it is admitted by official spokesmen of the régime: the number of cattle is lower in 1953 than in 1916; and while the number of sheep is 14 per cent higher, and the number of pigs 23 per cent higher, these increases are far smaller than the comparable growth of the population. If present figures are compared with those for 1928, the failure becomes even more marked—the past twenty-five years have been a disaster for Soviet livestock-breeding, as Mr. Krustschev himself recently informed us.

It has been argued that the backwardness of stock-breeding is partly intentional, since meat and milk are expensive commodities. Wheat produces more calories than stock-breeding per acre of cultivated land. Unfortunately for this argument, in 1938—according to the best observers of Soviet affairs—the quantity of cereals available per person was actually less than in 1913, while the figure for 1952 seems to be just about equal to that for 1913. The only crops whose production has advanced much more rapidly than the population are sugar beet and industrial fibres.

One last fact must be noted. The growth of the Soviet population, during the forty years following 1914, has been retarded by a series of historic catastrophes. Without taking into consideration the losses during the First World War, the population diminished by 8·3 million from 1918 to 1920, the losses during the 1921 famine are numbered at 5 million, the famine

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years 1933–34 cost 9 million human lives, and the total losses of the Second World War, taking into account the deficit of births, amounted to 37·5 million.* Civil wars, famine, and foreign wars have, since 1914, played in Russia a classically Malthusian role. Even so, during this period the growth of population tended to exceed that of the means of subsistence. The population has increased since 1945 by about 3 million a year, that is at a rate of 1·5 per cent. There is no evidence for such a rate of advance in agricultural production.

If such has been the outcome of the application of Soviet techniques in Russia, one wonders if the common antithesis applied to Asia, "Malthus or Marx," makes any real sense. Unquestionably Communism succeeds in transferring the surplus rural population to the industrial towns, and with the mechanisation of agriculture can obtain equal agricultural output with reduced manpower. But capitalism succeeds in doing just this, too. Indeed, it was capitalism's function to accomplish it, according to the author of the *Communist Manifesto*.

If the Russian experiment still has a general significance, it is surely this: grand plans for industrialisation, centred round heavy industry, and which in themselves bring no immediate increase of the means of subsistence, force the State to appropriate a greater proportion of the agricultural output in order to feed the towns. As these deliveries cannot be paid for (the State does not possess sufficient consumer goods), the use of force becomes inevitable. Such forceful appropriations eventually dry up the source: the peasant has no desire to increase his harvests, since the profits of his labour do not return to him. This is the "contradiction" in the Communist economic system—a contradiction no less flagrantly observable than those posited of capitalism in *Das Kapital*.

Is such an experiment really an example for Asia, with its overwhelming problem of malnutrition?

THE under-developed countries of the 20th century do not have to invent industrial civilisation, they merely have to imitate or import it. The transfer is in many ways simpler than the invention, but it does bring certain problems that the initiators in the West did not meet. If Soviet Russia does not offer a working model for Asia, then neither does America.

There are two particular risks in the attempted imitation of a Western industrialised economy by an under-developed one. First, in this age of virulent nationalism every government wants to be armed like a great power. But armament industries have become extremely costly. Even those under-developed countries with huge populations have to choose between military dependence on foreign countries and costly installations in imitation of the Western world of 1954. It seems probable that the introduction of certain industries in Asia (the motor industry, electronics, etc.) has been a false step; but it is hard to see how the damage can be undone.

Secondly, the West—especially the United States—presents a far too modern model for Asia's needs, one in which the emphasis is no longer on production but on consumption. The American model discourages savings. The American standard of living, as displayed by Hollywood movies, glossy magazines, and tourists, inspires in Asia feelings of astonished envy, and incites an unhealthy propensity to consume. The businessman of every free Asian country wants to own an American car, and the middle classes are blind to slow and small improvements in their lot, seeing only their inferiority in comparison with the European or American middle classes.

The Western model also produces another effect, both fortunate and unfortunate. There is an inevitable insistence on the use of the most up-to-date medicines, with a consequent fall in the mortality rate. In Europe too, there was a time (before 1800) when the birthrate remained static, or fell slowly, while the mortality rate fell more rapidly—a period of rapid increase in population. But in Europe this fall in the mortality rate was mainly due to economic progress, to an increase in available food. In most under-developed countries today, it is mainly due to the progress of

* This is the figure given by the *émigré* Russian economist, Propokovicz. It has been discussed by other experts and is probably exaggerated.

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medicine. As a result these countries have the fertility of European nations in 1750 and their mortality rate in 1900.

The "originality" of the Soviet method, as we have seen, lies in its having increased the appropriation of agricultural produce without actually increasing the amount produced, and in devoting the greater part of investment to heavy industry, thus depriving itself of the consumer goods which would make the peasants sell their produce. Were the same technique applied to India, the "elimination of useless mouths" would easily surpass the 60 or 70 million lost to Russia since the Revolution. On the other hand, the American method of the 20th century is simply not applicable to Asia. Perhaps the American methods of the 19th or 18th centuries would be; but modern Asia, heir to the welfare economies of our day, finds these methods unacceptable.

THE present situation has no analogy in the history of Western countries—not even of Russia. Neither from the point of view of industry nor agriculture is India's position in 1954 comparable with Russia's on the eve of the First World War. Russia in 1913, with 170 million inhabitants, produced 3 million tons of steel, while India in 1950 produced 1.5 million. Russia, which in 1913 disposed of more cereals and livestock per head than France, knew nothing comparable to the recent demographic and economic development in India, where, in the last twenty years, the population has increased by 3 or 4 million a year while the rate of output of the principal crops has remained static. Any attempt to industrialise India without increasing agricultural output would lead to catastrophe. The only practicable way of development, without recourse to inhuman violence, involves priority for agriculture. The basic food supply in all Asian countries is too inadequate for industrialisation to be accomplished successfully without substantially improved agricultural output. Perhaps, in the search for a patron saint of economy in Asia, it is not Marx or Malthus who should be chosen, though both are partially in the right, but rather those for whom the source of all riches is the earth—let us say, the Physiocrats, whose heirs may be found in modern Japan.

It is Japan, rather than the Soviet Union or the United States, that could provide a model for Asia. In 1870, the leaders of the Meiji period undertook the economic development of the country, and this without having recourse to Western capital, at least in the first years. During the half-century in which Japan managed to "Westernise" her economy (with much less to start with than had Russia), agricultural production was doubled, while 12 per cent to 17 per cent of the national income was invested each year. It is true that the development of the Japanese economy, admirable as it was, came to an impasse, with the rise in population finally outstripping agricultural productivity; so that Japan today (like Great Britain) is dependent on the export of manufactured products to the fickle world market. Nevertheless, in all economic history there has hardly been a comparable *tour de force* to that in Japan between 1870 and 1930. The supply of the means of subsistence increased a little faster than the population, which doubled, while the educational system was overhauled, public services (railways, roads, etc.) were set up on the Western model, and the surplus rural population was transferred to the factories and to the service industries of the cities.

In other words, the leaders of the Meiji period managed to accomplish what today seems extraordinarily difficult:

(1) They diverted from agricultural output a sufficient amount both to feed the towns and supply some savings for reinvestment, without discouraging the peasants from producing. (After the suppression of the feudal régime, the State tax was much lower than the rent previously paid to the *daimios* and *samurais*.)

(2) They restricted consumption in such a way that a large part of the increased production was invested. (The redemption of feudal rights with bonds which inflation would devalue furnished the initial resources, while taxes and self-financing by individual enterprises brought the necessary additional capital.)

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(3) They managed to balance the various aspects of economic development in such a way that the demand for goods coming from new factories was never below the supply. Certainly, during the period of industrialisation, the incomes of the masses did not increase at the same rate as the national income. However, in spite of this, Colin Clark in his *Conditions of Economic Progress* gives statistics according to which the income per head of the working population almost tripled, while the income per head from agriculture doubled, between 1889 and 1925.

What was the secret of this unprecedented success?

There seems to be no doubt as to the answer, which is quite simply the foresight and resolution of the ruling class. The leaders of the Meiji period had the extraordinary intelligence to liquidate the feudal structure (although they themselves belonged to the noble class), to free the peasants, to make some of them landowners, and to organise a system of universal education. The aristocrats, who under the Shogunate had become parasitical—they no longer fought, and merely allowed themselves to be kept by the peasants—not only staffed the new Army, but also the universities, public administration, and in some measure the new industries.

THE position of India is, in a sense, worse than that of Japan at the beginning of the Meiji period, just as it is worse than that of the Soviet Union at the beginning of the 20th century. The reason is the same in both cases: the growth of population has far outstripped the means of subsistence.

Economically, the immediate necessities can be reduced to three: the need to increase agricultural production without the peasants consuming the whole of the increment; the need for the whole country to save a greater proportion of the national income, as this increases; the need to persuade the State or the entrepreneurs to invest, not according to a rigid plan, or in response to the automatism of the market, but by taking into consideration the necessities of well-balanced economic development. Is a régime such as India's incapable of fulfilling these three prerequisites? I do not think so by any means.

The leading Indian officials, working on the elaboration and execution of the five-year plan, stand up very well in comparison with their Western counterparts. The technical and administrative capacities which Japan, over a few decades, found mainly in its old ruling class, are already possessed by India, or at least can be acquired in a short time through the hiring or borrowing of a few friendly experts. But what about the government's ability to direct this transformation? The answer here is less certain. Undoubtedly the various party leaders of India are intellectually equal to those of Japan or any Western country. But a capacity for governing is not to be confused with a talent for thought or writing. It demands the art of managing men, a comprehension of what is essential and what is not, and, above all, the courage to carry out necessary measures. Perhaps the rarest (but most indispensable) virtue of a ruling class or party is to be able to maintain the solidarity of the group in the face of internal rivalries and conflicts. Not enough time has elapsed since the withdrawal of the British, and the authority of Mr. Nehru is still too absolute for any categorical judgement to be made. However, it can be said that, for the next ten or fifteen years at any rate, the chances that the new élite will maintain a sufficient internal coherence are good.

Is the élite capable of introducing a successful agrarian reform, in particular the elimination of the *zamindars*? No reform of this kind can remedy the basic ills—the shortage of cultivable land and the excessive population; but without freeing the peasant from the grip of the usurer, there is no prospect for improvement at all. Unquestionably a democratic régime, proceeding legally, will accomplish such a reform less quickly than a despotic and arbitrary one. And in India, this reform is the responsibility of the States, not of the Federal Government. It seems, however, to be on the way to realisation. Similarly, the improvement of agricultural methods, the erection of dams, and the establishment of systems of irrigation are all under

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way, though only in time will their result be noticeable.*

Can the government raise the necessary savings? That, at the moment, is the most difficult point. The proportion† of the national product which is put into savings remains low —about 5 per cent. Up to now the two principal sources have been the savings of private enterprises and of private individuals, especially those of the privileged minority. The Government seems now to want to finance investments by a budgetary deficit in the hope that the deficit, so long as it does not exceed a certain level, will encourage industrial expansion without provoking a rise in prices. But during the coming years, loans or gifts will probably be needed to increase investments substantially. The indifference of Western countries towards India's economic effort bears witness not only to great egoism but also to a lack of foresight. Whatever one may think of the foreign policy of the present Prime Minister, it is neither generous nor intelligent to reply to his neutralist declarations by the suppression or reduction of economic aid. The free world has a major interest in the success of India's economic efforts.

ONCE that has been said, it would be wrong to forget that, finally, everything depends on India herself. Gifts make it possible, for a few years, to incur deficits in external accounts, but in order to maintain or increase the percentage of investments in relation to that national income, internal savings must grow, keeping pace with the increasing national income. The present percentage of savings is tragically small.

In India—where order is now maintained, competent officials are not lacking, and the ruling group has been won over to the idea of economic progress—the democratic régime must give proof of a triple ability: the ability to modify social relations in rural areas in order to encourage production, the ability to modify gradually the beliefs which are incompatible with economic Westernisation, and the ability to impose substantial savings, in spite of the widespread poverty.

For some years to come, Nehru's State, successor to the one the English built up after the great Moguls, is not likely to be threatened by a Communist electoral victory. It is threatened only by the disintegration of the party in office. However, as the democratic régime lasts, the masses will be disturbed by the propaganda of the various parties, the economic changes, and the creation of linguistically homogeneous states. Will the democrats be able to hold the masses? Will they manage to eliminate gradually the habits and traditions incompatible with the spirit of industrial civilisation? Will they manage to bring India out of her poverty, free her from the caste system and other superstitions, without appealing impatiently—and futilely—to drastic discipline?

In order to spread certain institutions from one society to another, it is never enough to transfer experts or technical formulas; the essential is to change ways of thinking. Irrigation, factories, and aeroplanes are pitiless to certain beliefs. Machines do not exclude or impose any religion, but if they destroy an old one without giving birth to another, there is a vacuum. Economic development by democratic methods does not only presuppose the efficiency of elected rulers and deliberating assemblies: it also demands men who find the object of their faith and the principles of their morality outside politics. To develop such men, with such faith and principles, is the real challenge to Asia.

* On one point, which is not without importance, a régime which respects the personalities of its subjects is at a disadvantage compared with a despotism. Once the objective of improved living conditions for everyone is accepted, the Indian attitude towards animals appears scandalous. Must the monkeys be allowed to destroy a substantial part of the crops? And could not the enormous number of cows be put to better use, while respecting the law that they must not be killed? In India, it is age-old tradition, rather than the resistance of the privileged classes, which impedes reform.

† These figures have been taken either from the excellent weekly, the *Eastern Economist*, or from a publication of the International Monetary Fund, *Economic Development with Stability*, Washington, 1953.

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Music

There is no "Modern Music"

WHEN I am asked, "Do you like modern music?" it is because I am expected to say no. I answer yes to disturb, but I am embarrassed, because the thing I am being asked about does not exist.

For, indeed, "modern music" is hardly more than a manner of speaking. It is the invention of those people who have decided that after Wagner there has been nothing but a series of unpleasant noises. The expression designates no definable unity, unless it is that of a total refusal to listen to, and try to understand, everything that has been composed in our century. In short, "modern music" is the kind one does not like (because it does not resemble the kind one did like).

To speak of "modern" music in general, as people do, is to assume the existence of some sort of school, or common style, or unity of feeling, for which I see no conclusive evidence in the 20th century. There was the group of the Six, but they were linked only by friendship; a Honegger and a Poulenc have nothing else in common as far as I can see. There were the atonalists, but they are the ones who most obviously have nothing in common, and wish to retain nothing in common, with the other musicians of the epoch. The celebrated quarrel which once arrayed the followers of Piccinni against those of Gluck seems innocent and amicable enough after the categoric denunciations of all "reactionary" tonal composition pronounced by the disciples of Schoenberg. I can think of no two composers of the 17th and 18th centuries, or the Romantic era, whose works present differences of style as radical as those which separate our "moderns," Hindemith and Berg, for example, or Bartók and Britten, or the Stravinsky of *Oedipus Rex* and the Schoenberg of *Erwartung*. No epoch, perhaps, has known less unity than our own. In any case, none has shown so deliberate a desire to shun every appearance of unity, not only in style and technique, but even in its animating beliefs. And if some day, nevertheless, after all these negations and ruptures, all these refusals to continue anything else or resemble anything else, some profound relationship between the principal works of our century becomes apparent in spite of all the efforts of their authors, it is not our generation which will see it.

For the style of an epoch is very rarely discernible by the men who live in that epoch, and this for the same reasons that make a psychoanalyst incapable of analysing himself. Style springs from the unconscious. It depends upon what the conventions, rules and doctrines of the art have repressed into the unconscious. And it is in this way that the choice of rules determines the content of our dreams—and our style: i.e. negatively. That single unity which is conferred on the works of our contemporaries, by the rejection to which many people consign them all, can only proceed therefore from a failure to grasp these works. Because they differ from what has already been heard, because they do not recall known melodies, it is too lightly deduced that they resemble each other. But this is to judge a tapestry by the wrong side, a tapestry whose design—if it has one—remains unknown.

It is time to stop talking of "modern music." Let us speak only of contemporary works of music.

BUT the paradox must be pushed further. If the composers of today do, all the same, have something in common, it is precisely that they are less "modern," that they are less naïvely of their own time, than were a Rameau, a Haydn, or a Mozart. This is because they write music knowing the whole history of music—consciously afterward, and consciously trying to do otherwise than was done in the past. They have lost the naïve good conscience of the artist who accepts the commonplaces of

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his time. That is why we see them seeking for naïveté as an artistic virtue.

How often have I heard a young painter or composer sigh, "After X or Y there is nothing left to do. We have come to an impasse. . . ." This impasse is purely "historical," it is created by the historical spirit. If one has something to express, not knowing what is left to do comes to the same thing as not knowing how to say it *differently* from the last one to speak, and those who preceded him. But the great artists have always begun by speaking the language of their elders, even if they modified it little by little under the pressure of what they had to say, which was a little different. Today everyone wishes to begin at that stage of mastery of self and of personal means attained with difficulty by the great artists of the past—and immediately race beyond it, without having earned this freedom.

This is the reason, no doubt, for the tense, indeed angry, tone taken by many young theorists. One senses that they are a good deal more animated by the resistance they foresee than by joy in their discoveries. They make these discoveries *against* their opponents, whom they are quick to treat as imbeciles, or even suspect of bad faith. That is because they place and see themselves in History. Their principal concern seems to be to integrate themselves into a historical evolution which they declare to be "necessary" by no one knows what Hegelian logic. They talk a great deal about the "necessities of the age," borrowing from the vocabulary of economics and politics. But because one can prove that the car manufactured by a small factory is unsaleable for precise reasons of cost and price, and therefore no longer corresponds to the "necessities of the age" and of our great markets, one has hardly proved that the work of a non-atonal composer "is *useless* . . . and does not answer the necessities of his age."* (One may be permitted even to observe that this work is a good deal more "saleable" on the concert market.) The "new necessities of music" invoked by a Pierre Boulez or a John Cage are necessities only to the ear and the intelligence of a very small group of men acquainted with the whole history of musical technique.

But there is more to the matter. Today's public, immensely enlarged by the radio, directed by the managers of concerts, formed by its record collection, has itself also ceased to be "modern," in order to get used to living in history. It must finally be admitted: all the other epochs have been modern, but not our own. Our great public nourishes itself on the music of bygone eras. When it does not content itself with Beethoven and Brahms, it discovers not the talents of today but Purcell or Monteverdi. In Haydn's time no one would have played the composers of the 17th century, or even the earlier works of Haydn; it was his latest production that was played. But nothing is played any longer at our great Sunday concerts but the moderns of other times. And so the music of our own day naturally seems strange. This is perhaps also why our composers, separated from a public which has become too vast, deprived of the stimulation of direct reactions, tend in general to put technique and theory before that vague but powerful thing which is the spontaneous accord between the innovator and the pleasure of his auditors—that thing one calls, quite simply, taste.

How can we remedy this situation, which is the situation of poetry and painting in the 20th century too? It seems to me that it is not so much the composers who hold the key to this vital cultural problem as the men who choose the programmes of concerts and decide what shall be recorded. The more new music is played, the more the public will become contemporary, and the closer its composers will be brought to the better-educated sensibility of a growing élite. When art and the public create each other the result is an "epoch." I do not know if we are living one—but perhaps we are on its threshold.

In May 1952, at the festival held in Paris under the title, "Masterpieces of the Twentieth Century," more than a hundred symphonies, concertos, operas, and ballets were performed, over a period of thirty days. Not a measure of music composed before the year 1900 was heard —and every night the auditoriums were full. What could be more encouraging for the organisers of the European Festivals which seek to offer the "new"—that is to say, to rejoin their century? But is it not strange that to live in one's time has become, in our days, a notable exception, an adventure, and a financial risk?

Denis de Rougemont

* Pierre Boulez, in an otherwise important and extremely intelligent essay in *La Revue Musicale*, April 1952.

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Films

Griffith, Stroheim, and the Decline of Realism

IT cannot be stated too often that we owe the whole concept of the modern cinema to one man alone: David Wark Griffith, as no maker, critic, or student of motion pictures would deny. With the possible exception of the mobile camera (said by Professor Siegfried Kracauer to have been conceived, originally, by the script-writer Carl Mayer), all technical innovations can be traced back to him: the close-up; the fade and the dissolve as means of visual transition from scene to scene; and, perhaps even more important, the art of constructive editing (later known as *montage*): the swift juxtaposition of one shot to another contrasted or associated image, for the purpose of arousing an appropriate emotional reaction from the audience.

It is true—as Sergei Eisenstein pointed out in a magnificent essay—that this latter technique had already been used in a literary form by Charles Dickens (possibly the most "cinematic" of stylists, though—apart from David Lean's versions of *Great Expectations* and *Oliver Twist*—this quality is conspicuously lacking in screen adaptations of his work). Not only was Griffith a great admirer of Dickens, but he began directing films at a period on which the new school of American naturalistic writers had left an indelible mark; one of these, Frank Norris, had also employed the method of ironic contrast, intercutting the death of a destitute widow from starvation with descriptions of the sumptuous dinner given by a railroad-king obliquely responsible for her condition, and a strikingly similar comparison occurs—between unemployed workers unable to afford bread and a rich speculator's banquet—in one of Griffith's earliest films, *A Corner in Wheat* (1909), which must have originated from a short story by Norris bearing an almost identical title.

So the tradition of realism in films was born; and though Griffith is better known for his spectacular masterpieces *The Birth of a Nation* and *Intolerance* (which set a standard of screen narrative by cross-cutting and contrapuntal action never since surpassed), he was to return again and again to the examination of those social, moral, and industrial problems that continued to preoccupy him long after Hollywood escapism had condemned such themes as certain of failure at the box-office: one of his last pictures, *The Struggle*, made in 1931, was based on a play of Émile Zola's about alcoholism.

BUT if Griffith's ideas were derived primarily from literary sources, he translated them entirely into visual terms. By introducing the flashback as a fluid link between past and present, close-ups of various sizes to illustrate his characters' thoughts and emotions, and adopting a two-camera and quadruple-set technique not dissimilar from that used in television today, he broke boldly away from the theatrical conventions in which he had been trained: unlike those contemporary producers and directors who are content to interpret the events in some dull best-seller without imaginative alteration or to film a successful stage-play exactly as it stands.

Erich von Stroheim, Griffith's pupil, continued in the naturalistic mode (indeed, his passion for authenticity of background detail finally came to border on the fanatical), but his psychological approach to the screen-medium

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was markedly different and individualist to a degree. In many ways he is perhaps the purer artist of the two: lacking Griffith's lyrical sense, and the tenderness that occasionally degenerated into bathos, sentimentality, and melodrama, his own brand of poetry was at once more sensual and more severely classical: his pity, like a surgeon's, subjected to such iron control that it was often mistaken for mere clinical curiosity by those too fastidious spirits who were repelled by his flat refusal to show disgust or anger, shed glycerine tears for the suffering, or diverge in any way from the rigid objectivity imposed upon him by the tenets of his artistic creed. (When he permits himself to do so, the result is regrettable; the one flaw in an otherwise impeccably balanced production, *Foolish Wives*, is the scene where the frustrated chambermaid throws herself, after much indecisive posturing, from the cliff-top into the moonlit sea. Her abject jealous misery has been previously, and poignantly, conveyed by the camera's slow track-in to close-up of her anguished face framed by an iron bedstead, whose bars symbolise the prison of self from which there is no escape: since, after this, her last desperate act is unnecessary and out of keeping with the general mood of the picture, it arouses only an embarrassed snigger which has nothing to do with the acting conventions of the time.)

Griffith had a strong puritan streak and a burning desire for reform; Stroheim (certainly not devoid of moral values, since his first two films could be described as parables of original sin) was not directly inspired by the wish to expose any particular social evil, but rather to present an overall prospect of human corruption: his protagonists are either beyond redemption when we come upon them or the dry rot has already set in below the surface, the decay is spreading out of sight. Criticism of the established order was implied, never explicit, in his work: the camera-lens supplied the only comment, reflecting not only the tarnished outer shell of life but, like an X-ray photograph, the corrosion within: it was up to the audience to voice an indignant protest against the system that allowed such insanitary conditions to prevail.

It was in their respective attitudes towards sex, however, that Stroheim, as a director, differed most from his master: the love-interest in Griffith's films, usually tormented and tragic, was spiritually pure; though the heroines might err, it was always through an excess of their innocent trust in mankind: there was more than a touch of Drury Lane in his apotheosis of the Dickensian ideal, for ever epitomised by the appealing fragility and wistful vacant loveliness of Lillian Gish. Stroheim, in direct contrast, treated sex as a powerful motivating force; he pictured women as frail in the Shakespearian sense: lunar creatures whose secret inner ferment mounted with the fluxional tides (hence, perhaps, the symbolic moonlight flooding of so many of his "romantic" scenes); avid for carnal pleasure beneath a superficial coolness and decorum; the natural prey of any specious seducer willing to provide release from their repressions.

Woman, then, became the eternal Eve in a paradise already lost, where the serpent's iridescent scales were replaced by immaculate uniform and the tempter wore the arrogant Prussian mask (schooled to a cold impassivity matching his style of direction) that Stroheim as a former officer of the Palace Guard could assume at will: only by an occasional sardonic twitch of the muscles round the mouth, a derisive gleam faintly perceptible behind the vitreous stare of his monocled eye, did he betray his delight in these uninhibited exposés of a type which he, the aristocratic Viennese evidently looked upon with fascinated loathing. To his series of roles in this genre, he added a psychological depth of impudent depravity which no actor impersonating a member of the German military caste during the 1914 war has ever achieved, and which countless imitators have not yet equalled: it was the measure of his histrionic skill that, as the Man You Love to Hate, he came to be identified in the public mind with the parts he acted rather than the films he made.

The culmination of Stroheim's first period was foreshadowed in his two previous pictures, *Blind Husbands* and *The Devil's Passkey* (1918 and 1919 respectively). These were films of moderate length, made within a reasonable budget, and their resounding commercial success resulted in the director being given the latitude to embark upon a vaster and more ambitious project: a restatement and summing-up of the paradisiacal

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theme in which the "garden eastward of Eden" was represented by Monte Carlo during the post-war inflationary years and the snake in the grass was not this time a Teuton but an international spiv of Slavonic origin posing as a Russian prince.

Foolish Wives (1920–21) was originally intended to run for twenty-one reels (eight reels longer than *Intolerance* itself) and to be shown in two parts; though, owing to the unwarranted interference of Universal Pictures' executives, the released version was eventually cut to almost half its initial length. Stroheim, who not only wrote the story and screenplay, directed the picture, and enacted the principal role, but also designed the sets in conjunction with Richard Day, spent nearly a year in production; meanwhile the rising cost, which the Publicity Department proudly assessed as totalling a million dollars, was proclaimed on the Great White Way by an enormous electric sign that spelt the director's name $troheim.* His insistence on absolute verisimilitude—triumphantly justified in the outcome, since we seem at times to be watching a documentary of Monte Carlo rather than a studio-reconstruction of the city—caused him to erect an exact facsimile of part of the Casino's façade; and in doing so he might have been building his own memorial: for the legend of his extravagance—fostered at first, for advertisement's sake, by those who were later to turn it against him—threw a long shadow which came to eclipse, in the eyes of parsimonious producers, the stature of his achievement. (By a stroke of irony which he must appreciate, the prodigal expenditure that earned him such disapprobation was perpetuated, and even exceeded, by Hollywood mediocrities of the same type from which his detractors were drawn; today, far more lavish sums are squandered on so-called "epics" which, once seen, are forthwith forgotten.)

Despite its popularity in Europe, the transatlantic reception of *Foolish Wives* could have done little to diminish Stroheim's growing unpopularity with his financial backers: a flanking attack by a female federation, outraged protests from puritanical critics, demands for drastic censorship, and severe moral strictures were now added to the accusations of heedless improvidence, and a break with Universal Pictures duly followed. None the less, it must be said in all fairness that no policy of retrenchment seems to have been insisted upon by Metro-Goldwyn-Mayer, the producers of *Greed* (1923): though here again the finished product (almost five hours of screen-time and longer than *Birth of a Nation*) was whittled down by more than half for public release.

Here the sophisticated Continental backgrounds and sumptuous interiors were abandoned for the unremitting squalor of the San Francisco slums and the arid immensity of the Californian wastes, where the protagonist (a moronic dentist of massive build and dubious qualifications, who has become infected, through extreme economic pressure, with the avarice to which his wife has already succumbed) eventually dies, handcuffed to his enemy under the implacable sun; the actual cost of production must have been enormous, for none of the scenes—not even the closing sequences in Death Valley itself—were shot in the studio, and the difficulties attendant as a result (the problem of adequate interior lighting, for one) may readily be imagined.

Frank Norris's novel, *McTeague*, from which Stroheim's script is adapted, was published in 1898; and the director, with almost obsessional care and patience, recreated scrupulously both the period atmosphere and the appropriate décor, running the complete gamut of poverty, from the stuffily overcrowded, shabby-genteel apartment shared by the couple during their early married life, to the cumulatively sordid dilapidation of later years: the soiled, tumbled sheets, the warped, dusty furniture and broken crockery, the hoarded gold under the bed. (Those who commented recently, in the daily press, on the lack of "style" in Stroheim's films, should have observed more closely the careful composition of the separate shots, and the use of extraneous detail as a frame against which the inner tension of the characters might be projected in higher relief; just as those who have sometimes censured him for lack of feeling should have listened to his moving tribute to D. W. Griffith, broadcast after the great director's death.)

*The author is indebted to Lotte Eisner's informative and carefully documented essays for these and other details of this Director's early career, and also to the British Film Institute for supplying copies of programme-notes to the recent season of Stroheim films shown at the National Film Theatre, in which Mme Eisner's essays were reprinted.

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SEEING these pictures today, even in their truncated form, one is primarily struck by their perennial freshness of subject-matter and psychological approach; secondly, by the intensely visual quality of their presentation. Here, still surviving in an age of redundant dialogue and, worse still, explanatory narratage, are stories really told in pictures; the sub-titles are few, employed mainly for the introduction of new characters and to interpret situations arising from the dictates of plot, where a few lines suffice (one is reminded of an early Chaplin comedy, *The Count*, where the entire motivation is conveyed by a single title): yet the most obtuse member of the audience could not fail to catch up, though it is true that much of our ability to understand is due, in *Foolish Wives*, to Stroheim's masterly performance as the spurious prince (the stiff, "correct" military bow and unsmiling gallantry for public occasions; the sly, insidious smile and the sudden ribald grin, superbly indicative of his true nature as he relaxes in bathrobe on the terrace or contemptuously pockets the savings extorted from the pathetic, deluded chambermaid). One cannot avoid a twinge of admiration for his effrontery and resourceful cunning; yet he is never portrayed as other than entirely contemptible: a pimp, a pervert, and a coward: trapped in a fire, he leaps to safety first, abandoning the pregnant American wife to her fate on the burning balcony; knocked down by her outraged husband, he threatens a duel but sets out, instead, to seduce the beautiful, vacuous daughter of an old Italian artist who supplies him with forged banknotes as a means of support. (The counterfeit *motif* is constantly repeated in this caustic appraisal of a capitalist Eden, where the apples on the tree of knowledge have turned sour and lie, as rotting windfalls, on the ground: even the hair of the "prince's" female accomplices proves to be false, and they wrench off each other's wigs when arrested by the police.)

The penultimate scenes of *Foolish Wives* suffer most from their mutilation in the studio: the murder of the prince, when surprised in his attempted rape by the counterfeiter, is deleted altogether, and the sight of the old man carefully inserting a shrouded corpse down a manhole comes as a too-abrupt shock in consequence; the film ends at this point, and we are not allowed to see, as Stroheim intended, the body of Karamzin floating out on a tide of scum and refuse accumulated in the bowels of the corrupt city.

THE powerful impact of *Greed*, on the other hand, remains unimpaired; much though we deplore the fact that the original is denied us, one cannot help feeling, also, that the deletion of the allegorical sub-plot, for instance, may have heightened the tempo and allowed a greater concentration on the central situation: perhaps the circumstance that Rex Ingram (who in his own productions showed some sympathy with Stroheim's aims) was part-responsible for the invidious labour of cutting explains the basic symmetry of the edited version. In one important instance only is there obvious evidence of something missing: the transformation of McTeague's friend Marcus (admirably played by Jean Hersholt) from a comic but good-hearted vulgarian to a sullen, malicious enemy appears too abrupt, and the apparent motivation (his envy of Mac for marrying Trina after she has won the lottery) seems insufficient, for we are given no previous indication that Marcus has been affected by the prevailing acquisitiveness of the general atmosphere.

STROHEIM has declared that he considers *Greed* as his "one real picture"; certainly it must be acclaimed his masterpiece. He does not appear in the film himself; but, though his direction is at its most impersonal and objective, the controlling force of his personality can be felt throughout: from the timorous courtship in the dental parlour to the egregious embarrassments of the wedding day (the ceremony interrupted by the passing of a funeral cortège outside, to symbolise the doom that lies ahead of the unhappy pair): through the middle sequences of increasing disintegration to the murder of Trina by McTeague and the final tragic irony beneath the incandescent desert sun, he exercises an authority over production and performance that extracts every shade of meaning implicit in the theme.

Since then, his pictures became mainly sardonic variations on the Cophetua legend (*The Merry Widow*, *The Wedding March*), culminating in the incomplete, ornately expressionist *Queen Kelly* (1928), which was "swept off the floor," Lotte Eisner tells us, by the advent of sound and the release of *The Jazz Singer*. Although always remarkable as cinema (*The Wedding March* being particularly notable

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for Stroheim's interpretation of one of his favourite roles), these later films never attained to the lonely eminence of *Greed*, which remains a solitary landmark in the history of cinematic realism, its influence manifest chiefly on the Continent, where Jean Renoir, for one, has admitted his debt to Stroheim as Eisenstein, Pudovkin, and René Clair have acknowledged theirs to Griffith.

Who, in America today, are the heirs to the tradition? John Huston (*Treasure of the Sierra Madre*, *The Asphalt Jungle*, *Red Badge of Courage*); or Billy Wilder (*The Lost Weekend*, *Ace in the Hole*, *Sunset Boulevard*—in which Stroheim himself played opposite Gloria Swanson in a situation which might have arisen from the abortive production of *Queen Kelly*)? The nearest candidate, of course, would be Orson Welles, whose *Citizen Kane* and *Magnificent Ambersons* surely owed much, in their grandiose composition and meticulous devotion to detail, to the Stroheim example. Yet it seems unlikely that, owing to circumstances not dissimilar from those responsible for the long silence of his predecessor, Welles will be able to make a realistic film again; there has been a marked abandonment, also, by European directors, of the naturalist genre: Italy, after a succession of splendid pictures, seems about to compromise with the Wardour Street slogan of Breasts and Bullets, with the French (Clouzot apart) appearing to follow suit.

Griffith and Eisenstein are dead; Welles, and Stroheim himself, immobilised; with the encroachment of television, 3D, Cinemascope and similar innovations (entailing inevitably a flood of photographed plays, outdoor and Biblical spectacle), it may be that the realistic mode is not only headed for a decline: but is, indeed, already dying.

J. Maclaren-Ross

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The Twilight of Liberalism?

THE dialectic between Mr. Irving Kristol's "Negative Liberalism" in the January issue of ENCOUNTER and Mr. Iain Fletcher's reply in the May issue illuminates many aspects of "Liberalism" of which we had been aware, without fully understanding them. Just as the work of an inspired painter can reveal to us the hues and shades of twilight, so the sincerity and clarity of Mr. Fletcher's writing reveals the twilight of Liberal thought.

To many people, talk about the twilight of Liberalism will be almost synonymous with talk about the end of the world. But many of the good things in the modern world, for which "Liberalism" takes the credit, are not its exclusive property at all, and may be expected to survive when this particular body of ideas has disappeared; and at the same time, some dangerous and undesirable fruits have grown from this same stem of Liberalism.

Most writers on this subject happily—indeed perhaps deliberately—discuss "Liberalism" without even defining it. Mr. Fletcher plays fairer than that. He still finds it necessary to give a very long and diffuse definition. The dictionary definition of a liberal as one "favourable to changes and reforms tending in the direction of democracy" he finds entirely inadequate. Now it is all very well for a vulgarian to say that a word is going to mean what he chooses it to mean. But for an educated man to want to tamper with the dictionary is a rare and rather serious event. It only seems to happen in respect of some idea which is very much hated, or very much loved. Ordinarily, when we want to attach a word to an idea, and the dictionary tells us that the word is already pre-empted, we coin a new phrase to express our meaning. But if the word in question has acquired, over the course of years, a strong emotional value, then we are inclined to say that the dictionary must alter its definition, rather than we, in order that we may continue to direct our emotions down exactly the same channels as before.

To many people, indeed, "Liberalism" is now a faith, supplying a coordinating force in their lives, at once intellectual, æsthetic, and spiritual, providing a coherent set of concepts about the nature of the world, as religions do. Does this faith bear any relation to the various movements which have been called "Liberal," multifarious, and indeed often mutually contradictory as they are?

THE origin of this word was, in fact, Spanish, in the first decades of the 19th century. The Spanish liberals believed, as other Spaniards have done, that the right way to promote their ideas was by armed insurrection and civil war, and they led their unhappy country into the first of that series of civil wars from which it has suffered. The Spanish and other European liberals demanded, firstly, representative and democratic government; secondly, free trade, free enterprise, and lower taxation; and thirdly (except for a small minority of them), the complete extirpation of the Christian faith. It is no use giving the stock reply that the European liberals were hostile only to Catholicism and the Catholic Church, and not to other forms of Christianity. This statement carries the implication that there are at any rate some brands of Protestant Christianity with which such liberals were in accord. Such an idea would have come as a great surprise to them. Most European liberals had never even heard of Protestantism; to them, Christianity and the

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Catholic Church were identical, and in hating one they hated the other. In northern Europe the liberals were just as implacably opposed to the official Lutheran and Calvinist Churches. It is only in the English-speaking countries that you are offered the choice of a hundred religions (and only one sauce, as the French proverb has it).

Although the majority of Englishmen, for a long time, have only given tepid, if any, support to their official Church, it is very much harder to whip up any sort of anti-religious campaign in England than it is in a Latin country. We do not find English liberal leaders (until comparatively recently) taking an irreligious or anti-religious line; but rather upholding the cause of the non-conformists against the Established Church (even when they were Anglicans themselves, as Gladstone was). By the end of the 19th century the energies of English Liberalism were being largely devoted to advocating nonconformist ideas, which to any European would have appeared howling lunacy, such as that beer and racing were capital sins, and that you must not play cricket on Sundays. Only now is the connection between Liberalism and nonconformity finally fading, as the sun sets over the Welsh hills.

Conversely, 19th century radicals and trade unionists were nearly all good Nonconformists —in England but nowhere else. In the rest of Europe, the anti-religious character of Liberalism was taken for granted.

But the word "Liberal" was to undergo other equally strange transformations. In Canada, by the middle of the 19th century, the title had come to be applied to a party whose principal object was to promote the interests, religious and educational as well as political, of the French-speaking Catholic population of Quebec, generally very conservative, while the Conservative Party proposed radical changes. In Australia, where a strong Labour Party grew up early, the word "liberal" was hardly used at all until recently, when the anti-Labour party, changing its name three times in all, decided that it now wanted to call itself "Liberal."

The strict *laisser-faire* outlook of 19th century English liberalism was modified when Old Age Pensions and National Health Insurance were introduced by the Liberal Government in 1909–12. By 1925, Lloyd George had bullied the Liberal Party into advocating (in the "Green Book") the nationalisation of land, and by 1928 Keynes had cajoled them into advocating (in the "Yellow Book") a very considerable degree of economic regulation. By the 1930's, it was hard to know what economic policy Liberalism stood for. Now it is becoming clear again. Lord Beveridge recently explained that Free Trade was essentially an anti-liberal idea.

Once again, however, it is only in England, where capacity for logical thought has never been very marked, that there has been such a complete reversal of liberal ideas on economics. The small group who still call themselves liberals on the Continent retain their 19th century inheritance intact, with its anti-religious beliefs on one side, and its unquestioning support of free enterprise on the other. In Germany and Italy these stalwart survivors of 19th century liberalism are once again of some importance. The French liberals reorganised themselves under the incongruous title of "Radical Socialists," a party whose only coherent policy now seems to be its anti-clericalism (and its desire to keep itself in office).

THE recent vagaries of English liberalism might have remained just one more piece of insular eccentricity, were it not that the intellectual leaders of English liberalism enjoy a wide following in other countries, particularly in the United States. And American "Liberalism" is now turning out to be an even stranger product than English.

The word "Liberal" hardly appeared at all in American political or intellectual history until the close of the 1930's. How the title "Liberal" came to be attached to the curious set of beliefs which now go by that name in the United States is hard to explain, unless we assume that it was in deference to English Liberalism. American Liberalism seems to be related to English Liberalism in its most modern form. Mr. Adlai Stevenson said recently that the outstanding characteristic of Liberalism is the extensive use which it makes of the power of the State—this is a far cry from 19th century European Liberalism. Likewise, the association of Liberalism with nonconformist Christianity (and temperance and anti-gambling) has gone. The prophets of the new Liberalism are the anti-religious ones—John Morley, Gilbert Murray, Bertrand Russell, and Lord Beveridge. Even though Mr. Stevenson be a good Unitarian and Senator Paul Douglas a good Quaker,

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American Liberalism is now predominantly an anti-religious movement.

The other outstanding feature of American Liberalism, which naturally appeals to us, is that it has always been "interventionist" in world affairs, and has done a good deal to weaken the traditional American isolationist outlook. To say this, however, is not to say that it has been pro-British. We are, as a matter of fact, very bad characters in American Liberal eyes because of our oppression of colonial peoples. In the 1940's (they are not quite so sure now) American Liberals tended to prefer Russia as a champion of freedom and progress as against outworn imperialism. Critical judgement does not seem to be one of the outstanding characteristics of Liberalism.

But the odder the assortment of ideas, the more passionately it is defended. A desire to have something to worship seems to be the main motive for many liberals, who have specifically denied any other faith. The highly ambiguous meanings of the word "Liberalism" not only provide a broad umbrella under which a diversified and intellectually undisciplined group can comfortably worship together. This is an unintelligent but comparatively harmless piece of opportunism. But in addition the word conveys an esoteric meaning which is rather sinister. Some of those Americans who call themselves Liberals have attributes which make them deservedly unpopular with their fellow-citizens, as anti-religious secularists, or as pro-Soviet fellow-travellers. Reading their literature and listening to their conversations, one must conclude that the word "Liberal" can be used to convey these hidden and unpopular meanings when one is speaking to an initiate, while at the same time the word can be given a much milder meaning if some non-initiate hears and questions it. The obscurity of definition of "Liberalism" in fact appears to be deliberate.

MR. FLETCHER says that some of the basic doctrines of Liberalism are taught by John Stuart Mill and Alexis de Tocqueville. This certainly adds to the rich variety of beliefs brought under the umbrella. We must have varying ideas about Liberalism, according to whether we study Mill's teachings at the beginning or at the end of his career, for they were quite different.

Tocqueville, of course, was quite a different kettle of fish. He was profoundly suspicious of democracy, and of the equalising and centralising tendencies which he thought must go with it, as destructive, not only of culture, but of liberty. Any follower of Tocqueville, if he is sincere, is bound to adopt a position which we would call extreme Conservative. Mr. Fletcher accepts this challenge. To him, the Liberal society is "one in which the reasoned opinions and sentiments of the educated individual are not excessively subject to the pressure—which, in a sense, *can* be called 'democratic' pressure —of mass excitement and mass prejudice; he may even think that it is only in a society embodying a certain aristocratic element" that Liberalism is likely to survive. This may be true; but if this be Liberalism, in what respect does it differ from Conservatism?

But it would be quite unfair to Mr. Fletcher to accuse him of the vagueness and evasion of which so many American and British Liberals have been guilty. He does his best to list clearly what he believes to be the concrete advantages which Liberalism has brought to the world.

We may give first and most honourable place to "humanitarianism." The 18th century and the Middle Ages both have their devotees in the modern world; but they were in fact periods of disgraceful cruelty. In other matters of morals, we may be the same as, or worse than, our ancestors: in respect of cruelty, we have certainly progressed. As Professor Nef has shown, we should, however, give first credit for humanitarian progress not to 19th century England but to 18th century France; particularly in humanising the conduct of war—in which field we are now rapidly slipping back to barbarism.

Humanitarianism means more than just the prevention of cruelty. In its widest sense, it means to sympathise with and to relieve the wants and sufferings of others—almost synonymous with Christian charity, the highest of the virtues. But this commendation can only be earned by those who devote their own efforts or sacrifices to the relief of suffering. Those (including some clergymen) who tell us that we are charitable and humanitarian because we have voted for a Welfare State in which the wants of the poor are relieved by imposing taxation on someone else are the worst kind of hypocrites—the present-day equivalent of the Pharisees.

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NEXT, Mr. Fletcher quite rightly hails the freedom of debate and of criticism as an achievement of modern Liberalism. In fact this is a more important institution than representative government itself. In Turkey, for example, the most important step forward was when an Opposition gained the right of free criticism; after that, the establishment of fully representative government was a comparatively easy step. (Incidentally, in a society in which all means of production were owned by the State, and we all therefore became civil servants, it is hard to see how there could be any genuine freedom of criticism, however democratic the Government's intentions might be.)

Nowadays, our advocacy of democratic forms of government is sober and experienced, compared with the uncontrolled enthusiasm of the 19th century liberals. We do not say that it will always bring the best results—we have seen too much of it for that. What we do say, on a firm basis of historical experience, is that autocrats and oligarchs are liable to make the most frightful mistakes, which go uncorrected because nobody is able to criticise them. A democracy which carefully preserves the right of free criticism, though not necessarily *the best*, is certainly in the long run the *least harmful* form of government. The modern democrat, in his more modest and defensible position, will not be so easily dislodged as was the 19th century Liberal.

Next, Mr. Fletcher mentions the Liberal principle of Toleration. It is true that all religious thinkers now agree, although many religious and political authorities in the past held the opposite view, that to attempt to impose religious belief by force is not only ineffective but also wrong. This again is an important step forward.

But the word toleration has another meaning, less creditable. A butcher may say that he tolerates a certain amount of thieving of meat by his employees, or the police that they find it convenient to tolerate a brothel-keeper in the town. These may be wise decisions: but they are made on grounds of expediency only. We may have to tolerate something which we know to be wrong, but such toleration certainly does not make it right.

A great deal of the "toleration" in the modern world is on the second definition, not on the first. Professor Toynbee tells us that the spirits that presided over its conception and birth were "Disillusionment, Apprehension, and Cynicism, not Faith, Hope, and Charity." Much "toleration" in the modern world is a mere indifference to right and wrong, as when American city politicians tolerate gangsters. Most liberals, to do them justice, are not at all "tolerant" in this sense of the word. (This form of expediency—if it really be expediency—is in fact much more often practised by Conservatives.) Liberals are, indeed, very intolerant of gangsters, tyrants, reactionaries, General Franco, Senator McCarthy, and the like. When, on the other hand, they claim credit for their religious tolerance, it may be because they have no faith themselves and regard all religious questions as unimportant, and political questions as the only ones which matter—compounding for the intolerance they are inclined to, by damning that they have no mind to.

AFTER a good opening, Liberalism is not now scoring so well. The next batsman sent in by Mr. Fletcher is "the achievements of natural science." It is true that the achievements of free countries of the last century have been very great, while Russia, Germany, Italy, and Japan during their totalitarian periods achieved practically nothing in the field of pure science (though unfortunately a totalitarian state is often capable of considerable achievements in applied science). But we make a serious mistake if we claim that pure science can only flourish in what we would call a liberal world. Anyone with any knowledge of the history of pure science must recognise the abundant achievements of Alexandria under its tyrannical monarchs, of England under Charles II, of 18th century France, and of 19th century Germany, which may have been under a much milder form of autocracy than Nazism, but could hardly have been called a Liberal State either, especially when the Universities were under strict government control.

More subjective judgement is necessary about the possible score of the next batsman—"a competing multitude of schools of art and of literature." One might well say that the powerful patrons of the modern world—the art dealers and the publishers—instead of encouraging competing schools, are imposing an ever stricter uniformity, and that a bad one. Earlier generations had genuinely competing schools, and many people think their results were much better than those which we produce now.

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One may react in the same way when Mr. Fletcher talks about "the richness and variety of Western philosophy." To some critics the achievements of most present-day philosophers seem neither rich nor varied. But then Mr. Fletcher breaks out of his narrow categorisation, and states what he believes to be the positive foundations of Liberalism—"the love of truth and reason and righteousness for their own sakes." But no love for the God who created truth and reason and righteousness, and love and beauty too; and of whose nature these are but manifestations. Reading between the lines, it looks as if the basic foundations of Liberal philosophy are still the supercilious contentions of the 18th century philosophers, that God and the supernatural do not exist, or that, if they do, they have no bearing upon human affairs. Mr. Fletcher's attitude towards religion, like that of many Liberal philosophers, is not to regard it as something to which they owe obedience, but rather the proud and sneering attitude that they "should study the need it serves, the root it grows from, what people get or think they get from it." *Non serviam.*

After denying, or more precisely ignoring the question of the objective truth of religion, the next step for many liberal philosophers is to deny the objectivity of truth altogether. Perhaps regarded as a distinguished philosopher in his own circle, Pontius Pilate asked "What is truth?", clearly expecting no answer. This he did before performing an act of cowardice which will be remembered to the end of the world.

THE first duty of any philosopher who professes to have anything to say about the conduct of affairs in the modern world is to examine the materialistic Marxism on which Communism is based, and to decide whether it is true or false. And if he finds that it is based on falsehood, as it is, he must hate and despise it with every fibre of his being, and seize every conceivable opportunity to attack and to discredit it. He must feel, at the same time, a genuine respect and affection for the men who hold these views, while implacably hating the views themselves; unless he does this, his efforts will be in vain.

On the matter of war, Mr. Fletcher writes some very sensible paragraphs, on the dangers of "the crusading spirit." His position here (which again most people would regard as conservative rather than liberal) is akin to that of Professor Butterfield, who holds that wars fought for "righteousness" seem, in fact, to leave the world in a worse mess than they found it; while wars fought for limited objectives, or for preservation of the balance of power, bloody and destructive though they may be, may, in the long run, be the lesser evil. This is an extremely interesting doctrine, whose truth may be debated for a long time to come. But Professor Butterfield has reached his conclusion by taking as his starting point the basically Christian position that we are all so sinful that we are not entitled to start "crusades." It does not appear that Mr. Fletcher and the liberals reach their conclusion from the same reasoning.

It is surely a sign that the liberal philosophers have abandoned the very idea of objective truth when they refuse to condemn Marxism, or any other philosophy, and claim that the only purpose of universities is to maintain a sort of permanent debate on philosophical questions, without ever reaching or teaching any conclusions. How like the Sophism on which the Greek intellectual world foundered!

The honourable exception among the liberal philosophers (if indeed he calls himself one) is Bertrand Russell. For him, at any rate, objective truth is a reality. And that is why, of all the philosophers, his criticisms of Marxism and Communism are most trenchant, unyielding atheist though he be. Surely the great argument for the study of mathematics is that it introduces us to the concept of objective truth—concrete and unassailable, but demonstrable and ascertainable, and entirely independent of human likes and dislikes. As Russell writes in his *History of Western Philosophy*—"the concept of 'truth' as something dependent upon facts largely outside human control has been one of the ways in which philosophy hitherto has inculcated the necessary element of humility. When this check upon pride is removed, a further step is taken on the road towards a certain kind of madness—the intoxication of power which invaded philosophy with Fichte. . . . I am persuaded that this intoxication is the greatest danger of our time and that any philosophy which, however unintentionally, contributes to it is increasing the danger of vast social disaster."

Colin Clark

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BOOKS

The New and the Old Isherwood

"'I'll even forgive myself. As a matter of fact, I just have. Do you know something, Jane,' I said, as I emptied my glass, 'I really do forgive myself, from the bottom of my heart.'" So speaks Stephen, the central character of Christopher Isherwood's new novel, *The World in the Evening*,* and on these words the book ends. Forgiveness of oneself is, of course, a spiritual state highly to be desired; but for those who accept the idea of personal guilt—and Mr. Isherwood belongs firmly to the generation of the guilt-acceptors—the deliberate statement of self-forgiving is an act of high seriousness. The slightest hint of triviality either in the conviction of sin or in the belief in its atonement is liable to produce an inelegant impression upon those who are asked to witness the confession. It is an embarrassment which I feel sure Mr. Isherwood must often have shared with his more discriminating contemporaries at those widely publicised intimate "sharings" of the Oxford Group in the early thirties. It was not so much the sincerity of the groupers that was doubted as their inadequacy to support the spiritual responsibilities they had assumed. It is exactly some such chasm between high intention and inadequate capacity that will, I am afraid, disturb Mr. Isherwood's admirers who have waited so long for this novel, and will, no doubt, delight his critics who have waited equally long to say "I told you so."

This failure in central purpose is particularly sad because *The World in the Evening* shows no decline in Mr. Isherwood's powers; indeed, in the understanding of certain human relationships and, above all, in technical control both of range and of organisation, it shows, I think, a very considerable advance. Nevertheless he has tried to stick out his spiritual neck a great deal further than it will stretch, and, by so doing, he has, I'm afraid, "asked for it." Mr. Isherwood's attainments entitle him to serious criticism. It is, therefore, I think necessary to examine this central failure in his work, where with a lesser writer one could merely expatiate on the incidental merits of the work and disregard the total intention. It is my purpose, then, in this article to begin with the brickbats and to end with the bouquets which Mr. Isherwood's extraordinary powers of entertainment and high technical achievement must always command.

Mr. Isherwood, of course, may argue that he is no longer writing of "Herr Isseyvoo" or "William Bradshaw," that his new hero Stephen is the creature of his own imagination, not a convenient cover name for autobiographical reporting. To the extent that his new novel has, I imagine, drawn more deeply upon his invention than his earlier work, this is true. Nevertheless it is impossible not to equate his hero's spiritual odyssey with his own. Mr. Isherwood's conversion is, no doubt, of vital importance to him, but *The World in the Evening* fails to communicate its urgency. A great deal of the novel is highly entertaining, much of it is percipient, some of it very moving, but it is not important at the level to which it aspires. This does not seem to me in the least degree surprising. Nothing in Mr. Isherwood's earlier work suggested that either his intellectual powers or his emotional strength would sustain a novel of the kind that could satisfy Dr. Leavis' criteria. To succeed in the portrayal of a man's progress from an undeveloped state of emotional parasitism to the inner conviction of a total and satisfying meaning in life that allows him to forgive even himself would

* *The World in the Evening*. Christopher Isherwood. Methuen. 12s. 6d.

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require, surely, either the tornado of Dostoevsky's emotions sweeping good and evil alike before it, or the enveloping calm of Tolstoy. No one in his senses could have supposed that Mr. Isherwood could create an Alyosha, Myshkin, or a Bezuhov. Unfortunately, Stephen is a peculiarly feeble vehicle for the expression of spiritual truth. There is, of course, nothing unacceptable in presenting the spiritual progress of a feeble personality, even if it be only from minus six to minus four, but the author must be fully aware of the smallness of his compass.

Mr. Isherwood is, I suspect, only a very little conscious of the triviality of Stephen's story. He is afraid on occasion, I think, that he may seem to have lost his sense of proportion, but this is no real conviction, it is rather the embarrassment of any convert when he appears before his former friends in his new role. Whatever happens it must not seem that grace has robbed him of his sense of humour, finding God must at all costs be shown to be tremendous fun. Of course, Mr. Isherwood is too perceptive, too sophisticated not to see how unbecoming this archness is in other godly folk. We are given many examples of the irritating little jokes which the Pennsylvania Quakers employ to humanise their rectitude. Nevertheless, when he is ill at ease with his own theme, he uses exactly the same tactic, though the archness and charm are more worldly, more *New Yorker* than those of his Quaker characters. The most distressing example of this comes with his hero's final confession of self-forgiveness which I have already quoted. This episode is either the crux of the whole theme or it is nothing; yet the author is careful to present it at the end of a conversation between Stephen and his wife when both are "high" after a few cocktails. It is true that all we have learnt of Stephen tell us that he might not be able to say such a thing unless he were drunk, but Mr. Isherwood somehow contrives to present this circumstance as charmingly excusing the confession, when clearly it either needs no excuse or it should not have been made at all.

THE truth is that Mr. Isherwood is not much at ease with "goodness" and "good people." In his earliest novel, *All the Conspirators*, the conventionally "good" were the targets of an irony which owed a lot to the ethics of Forster. They were the ununderstanding, the blundering, the philistine, the deadening forces in life. Conventional morality in the hands of the hero's mother and her elderly City friend was simply a weapon to deny the young self-expression and to treat themselves to the pleasures of self-inflicted martyrdom. This deadly, selfish, conventional goodness which Isherwood understood very well and ridiculed most entertainingly is continued in the character of Lily in *The Memorial*—once again the hero's mother. But in that novel, which owed so much to Virginia Woolf, we get his first presentation of a less conventional goodness which we are meant to respect. The presentation of the character of Mary shows the influence of Mrs. Woolf—"Coming down the gas-lit mews with three beer bottles under her arm, Mary experienced, as often before, a pang of love for her home. My dear little house, she thought." Mary is a more middle class, consciously Bohemian kind of woman than Mrs. Ramsay would have cared for, but the mould is similar. The most striking feature of the character, however—and this Mrs.

THE WORLD IN THE EVENING

CHRISTOPHER ISHERWOOD

'The camera has become the X-ray . . . Now we see the things really working in a context of actual life, really doing damage; and we see them met by the counter-challenge of responsibility and affirmation.' JOHN WAIN. (*Spectator*)

'. . . It's beautifully organized, the language shifting from American to English with the shifting scenes of the flashback, the dialogue sparkling and subtle, the narrative clear and sharp. All this one expects: but now there is a deeper compassion for others.' RICHARD MAYNE. (*Time and Tide*)

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Woolf would have found very alien—is the self-consciously jolly, leg-pulling sort of way in which she protects her emotions, her "goodness" from the world. "More work for the troops," she says, "Be little heroes won't you, and help your old Ma?" or, dealing with a heartbroken girl, "'Ave a drop of Mother's curse?" Mary of *The Memorial* is really the last "good" character in Mr. Isherwood's work until *The World in the Evening*. She is an Understander, an Acceptor—"Had Mary ever, during her whole life, had any really absurd, old-fashioned, stupid prejudice? Had she ever hated anybody?" In all the Berlin stories that followed, the Understanding and Accepting were done by Mr. Isherwood himself, and very brilliantly, if a little self-consciously, he did them. With his new novel, "good" characters appear again and once more they hide their emotions in the same rather embarrassing "chaffing" way. It is as though the author had communicated his own unease at the spectacle of "goodness" to his characters. There has always been a certain preoccupation with the ethics of his public school days about Mr. Isherwood's work, the first two novels are thick with it and it even obtrudes into so unlikely a situation as the story about Rügen Island. Its last imprint is left, I think, in this sort of self-deprecating facetiousness in which his "good" characters talk. It is a version of the traditional "chaffing" and "rotting" with which the cricket-captain hero of the school disguises—and, I fear, all too often advertises—his merits. I do not think that Mr. Isherwood has ever quite lost his idolatry of that school hero.

There is one outstanding example of this sort of embarrassing facetious "goodness" in *The World in the Evening*. Among the characters who are on the side of the angels are two "queers"—a doctor and his painter boy-friend. They are not sure possessors of the inner light, but, nevertheless, the honesty of their relationship and their troubled but persistent fight to come to terms with life are among the most important factors that aid the hero, Stephen, in his own awakening. From their first appearance, the tone of their relationship is set in this awful, self-consciously humorous key. "'Bob's one of the Dog People' [says his lover]. 'Even when he talks English, he has a thick Airedale accent. Sometimes, he does nothing but growl for days on end.' 'Yeah,' said Bob, grinning. 'When Charles and I met, I bit him and he got rabies. He's been crazy like this ever since.'" And again, "'I paint with my paw,' said Bob 'in various styles. I'm the canine Cézanne, the pooch Picasso, the mongrel Matisse.' 'Sure, you are,' Charles patted Bob's shoulder, as though he were trying to sooth an hysterical patient. 'And the tyke Toulouse-Lautrec.'" People in love do, of course, have the habit of facetious back-chatting, though the more discriminating naturally avoid imposing it on others. To say that all those who do not have the good taste, the consideration, to keep such exchanges for their hours of privacy are inferior people would be snobbish and untrue. But Mr. Isherwood puts forward this awful dialogue—a proper subject for satire—as a badge of their "goodness." The reason, I think, for this extraordinary lapse of judgement is a curious confusion in his mind between "goodness" and "cosiness." Wherever the good are found in life, he seems to say, there you can be cosy.

This is the more peculiar because, in general, his puritan conscience will not allow him to accept the more simple, less self-conscious forms of happiness. There is a passage in *The World in the Evening* when Stephen and his first wife Elizabeth are on their honeymoon in Paris. I have seldom read a more successful account of unselfconscious, transcendent human happiness than this. Of course, happiness of this kind does not usually endure. Mr. Isherwood, however, is almost savage in his assertion of its insecurity. I find it difficult to understand how anyone, who can describe so exactly a genuine if impermanent happiness of this kind, is able at the same time to treat respectfully the awful substitute cosiness I have described above.

THE answer lies partly, perhaps, in Mr. Isherwood's general disregard for intellectual competence. The intellect plays almost no part in his scheme. There is an awful passage in the book when the doctor, Charles, tells Stephen his philosophy of life. It revolves around the idea of a high sort of "camp" which is the mark of true artistic greatness. "High Camp is the emotional basis of the Ballet, for example, and of course of Baroque Art. You see, true High Camp always has an underlying seriousness. You can't camp about something you don't take seriously. You're not making fun of it; you're making fun out of it. You're

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expressing what's serious to you in terms of fun and artifice and elegance. Baroque is largely camp about religion. The Ballet is camp about love." He goes on to give a list of the great campers—Mozart, El Greco, Dostoevsky, Freud; but not Beethoven, Flaubert, or Rembrandt. This sort of arrant nonsense should never be treated seriously, but I fear it is not only Charles and Stephen who do so, but Isherwood himself. It is a nice, cosy substitute for thought.

The element of cosiness is very important in Mr. Isherwood's work. It is a somewhat smug emotion. It is already there, as I have said, in the character of Mary in *The Memorial*. It is there obliquely in *Mr. Norris, Sally Bowles*, and *The Nowaks*. Sally Bowles is quite a nice bitch, Arthur Norris a rather less nice scoundrel, and Otto Nowak a good-looking boy who is hardly nice at all. Mr. Isherwood is fully alive to all this and he presents them brilliantly. Nevertheless there is ultimately a certain false cosiness even in these Berlin stories. We are left with the feeling, not that these characters have been sentimentalised, but that somehow, because Herr Isseyvoo is so understanding a man, we have been privileged to get on to cosy terms with people whom we would otherwise have found worthless. There is nothing against liking bad people as I am sure Isherwood does. Still less against finding the inevitable elements of good in them. But there is something a bit disturbingly smug about doing so in a cosy, happy family way. It is this cosiness which throws out the balance of *The World in the Evening*. It is at its worst in the character of Sarah, who is the true vessel of spiritual light in the book. Sarah is the adopted aunt of the hero, who, after the death of his parents, made a home for him. She is an elderly Quakeress full of good works, wise platitudes, everyday little jokes. As such, she is adequately drawn and no more. As such, she might have been left. But Mr. Isherwood had to make her the source of inner light, a source taken for granted by the hero and then suddenly realised as the central spring of his regeneration. This element of sanctity hidden by everyday Marthaism entirely fails to convince. Let me quote the moment at which her sanctity reveals itself. It is told to Stephen by Gerda, Sarah's German refugee protégée, whose husband Peter is in the hands of the Nazis. "'We are sewing to make clothes,' says Gerda, 'and suddenly I

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cannot go on. I stop. I am crying so much that I cannot see the needle. . . . And, Stephen, do you know what was so strange? All the time that I am crying, Sarah is sitting, and still sewing, and she says nothing. . . . At first I think that she has not noticed. . . . And then I know that she knows—all what I am feeling, everything. She is with me so close, although she has not moved. It is as if she holds my hands. . . . The room gets very still. . . . And it was then that I knew that it is all right . . . even if Peter is not safe, even if the worst happens to him and to me. . . . Sarah made me know it. . . . Then she looks up and says—you will never guess—she says, "I think I will make us some hot chocolate." That was all.'" It just does not do, I think. The note of cosiness, of the homely vessel of spiritual depths is overdone. It is, in fact, in the two principal characters chosen to expound the theme that *The World in the Evening* breaks down. Sarah, the true saint, may be as homely as you like; Stephen, the saint in travail, may be feeble and ineffectual; but we must be convinced that beneath the deceptive outward symbols there lies an inward grace of wisdom and strength, and we are not.

I HAVE chosen to criticise at length the central failure of Mr. Isherwood's new novel, not only because his previous work gives him a right to serious criticism, but because I think that in all other respects *The World in the Evening* is an important advance on his previous novels. He has pretended to too much, but if he had not done so, I doubt if he could have made such a step forward. It is often the case when a good writer enters a new phase of creation. If Mr. Isherwood is not deterred by the criticism he will certainly receive, *The World in the Evening* points, I believe, to future novels with all the excellence of his old work and a considerably increased range.

After the criticism I have made, a reader may well ask in what the advance in Mr. Isherwood's work lies. First, I should like to mention one of the greatest qualities shown in *The World in the Evening*. If the author pretends to too much spiritually, he is admirably aware of his experiential limitations. This, I am sure, is a great strength in a writer. For Isherwood the important experiences happened before 1939 and he uses that period to illustrate his present position. Many critics at the moment—and I am among them—are anxious to see the contemporary scene exploited more in the contemporary novel. But that pious wish should surely not destroy our capacity for appreciating novels which satisfactorily exploit the immediate past. Many great writers have written solely out of their early experience. Mr. Isherwood has settled in post-war America, but the core of his imaginative life is still in pre-war Europe and nothing but praise should go to him for recognising this.

Now for the extraordinary advances I think he has made. I said earlier that they lay in two fields—the understanding of personal relationships and the extension of technical range. The two things are, of course, tied together. The growth of his understanding of people has demanded a corresponding growth of technique, and wonderfully, I think, he has responded to the demand.

Let me deal first with the increase of imaginative range. Mr. Isherwood has always had a powerful sense of place and time, of exact situation and the unspoken implications of such a situation. In the new novel he encompasses literary London of the late twenties, a young man's Paris of the same period, Bavaria with Nazism in the wings, Austria of the nineteen-thirties' intellectual pleasure-seeker, Mediterranean lotus land with the Spanish War offstage, and Hollywood when the War was still not America's affair. This is a very wide range and he never goes wrong. Ultimately, however, Mr. Isherwood is even more a novelist of character than of place. In *The World in the Evening* there are two major characters who seem to me more deeply felt and more truly realised than anything he has done previously: they are the two wives of Stephen—Elizabeth and Jane. The relation between Stephen and these two women is the first serious attempt of Mr. Isherwood to explore the complex patterns of emotional love. The love-hate relationships of mothers and sons were skilfully, if rather one-sidedly, treated in his first two novels. The pathos and absurdity of homosexual obsession with heterosexual boys or men is well drawn in Edward in *The Memorial* or in the Rügen Island story, but any reciprocal sexual relationship has always been treated sketchily up to now. The success, therefore, of the analysis of Stephen's relationship with his wives, the sympathy and clarity with which these are analysed, is a great triumph for the author. Not a little of this success, I think, is

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due to the fact that both Elizabeth and Jane have, in quite different ways, a great deal that is unpleasant in them.

ELIZABETH, the sensitive novelist of the twenties and thirties, owes a lot, I would imagine, to the journals of Katherine Mansfield and the personality of Virginia Woolf. It is very difficult to portray a writer, particularly one for whom, as was so often the case in those decades, life and letters were so curiously intermingled. Elizabeth is beautifully done. The intense egoistic preoccupation with life's meaning to *her*, the clinging to life combined with the neurotic and hypochondriac preoccupation with death, the awful paradox of a tired, ageing woman genuinely committed to a world of high, sensual values—all this is entirely convincingly presented. I was reminded so often of the last days of George Eliot in Cross' life. The pathos of Elizabeth's passion for her very young husband, her natural desire that his emotional dependence on her should increase, her high-minded attempt to free him from it as she is dying, are excellently brought to their fulfilment in the futile little episode of his unfaithfulness with a young man, Michael. The whole of this part of the book could not, I think, be better done.

If Elizabeth is a quite new extension of Mr. Isherwood's range, Jane is an improvement on an old theme. She is, in great degree, Sally Bowles seen again, but in *The World in the Evening* Mr. Isherwood has lost that satisfaction in standing apart, and that equal satisfaction with being cosy with the disreputable, which tinged so much of his earlier work with a sort of ironic sentimentalism. Jane is at once less of a bitch than Sally Bowles and also less sentimentalised. In Jane, I think, Mr. Isherwood, without altogether realising it, has drawn a very human, pleasant young woman who stands out above all his cosy saints.

As striking as this extension in emotional range is the corresponding growth of technique. Mr. Isherwood's previous novels have made few demands on his technical skill. *All the Conspirators* was a slight but admirable first novel *à la* Forster. *The Memorial* with its abrupt changes of scene and viewpoint was a rather slavish imitation of Mrs. Woolf. After these imitated constructions, he found his own standing in the camera-eye reportage of the Berlin

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novels, with their novel introduction of himself as central figure. He became absolute master of this form, but for those who regret that he has not remained faithful to it—and there are always admirers who do not want an artist to develop beyond the range of their own nostalgic admiration—it should be sufficient to recall the failure of *Prater Violet* which showed that Mr. Isherwood had done all he could with this form. And now, in *The World in the Evening*, he uses the Woolfian technique of change of time and place, of memory, journals, and letters with a logicality of sequence and a unification of purpose that makes the reading of the novel, even where its central theme is weakest, an absolute delight. Though one may doubt that the finished garment is the holy robe he intended to weave, the skill with which each thread is woven into the other in an intricate scheme is enough, I feel sure, to decide that Mr. Isherwood has not failed in his promise and that he promises even more for the future.

Angus Wilson

NUREMBERG RECONSIDERED

It is difficult to believe that "the unerring sentence of time" will be favourable to the Nuremberg tribunal, or to the very paradoxical Allied decision to try the Nazi leaders. We forget the dimensions of the paradox. In the years between the wars few educated people regretted that Lloyd George had been saved by the Dutch Government from his electioneering pledge to try the Kaiser; and the pitiful, nobly endured, but nevertheless unheroic diminuendo of Wilhelm II in exile was held to have pointed the right way to punish war-guilt while avoiding legends. By eliminating the chance of martyrdom Doorn was, in Sir Winston Churchill's fine phrase, "a harder accountancy" than the promised gallows. Had Sir Winston forgotten his own essay on the fallen Kaiser when his Government decided to put the German leaders of 1945 in the dock? Had none of his colleagues studied *La Légende Napoléonienne* and its origins? It would be interesting to know by what steps our rulers entered the trap which Lloyd George had avoided by a stroke of luck. Many readers may be tempted to search for the answer in Mr. Veale's *Advance to Barbarism*,* first published in 1948 and now republished with new material, for in this book the Nuremberg trials receive the indignant scrutiny of a British lawyer. Such readers are likely to be disappointed. The book is muddled and peevish. The late Dean Inge's foreword is the best thing in it.

The main literary fault of this faulty compilation is one of construction. Mr. Veale shows signs of not having made up his mind on the scope of his work before beginning to write it, so that it is not as easy as it should be to say just what it is about. Not being closely concentrated on its main subject, the Nuremberg trials, it is best described as a discursive study in the relapse from the refinement (much exaggerated) of 18th century warfare to the brutality of the World Wars, of which brutality the trials of Nuremberg are represented as an extreme consequence. If Mr. Veale had been able to keep his temper, and had attempted a simpler, more limited work, he might with luck have written something valuable, but as it is he has undertaken a vast conspectus of the history of war for which he is obviously not equipped. The reader begins to detect this in numerous mistakes and flaws in the detail. Mr. Veale makes a substantial deduction about Sir Charles Napier's character and political outlook from his supposed announcement of the capture of Sind in one word, "Peccavi," but he has not troubled to trace the pun to its origin. He believes that *Perfide Albion* is a witticism directed at the growth of the British Empire. He gives a reasonable account of Wellington's conduct during the trial of Ney but cannot resist a suggestive footnote hinting at dark doings and referring the reader to an unexpected authority—Mr. A. G. Macdonell! He quotes William Joyce as a grave judge of international affairs, and accepts the ridiculous views of Lord Northcliffe and Hitler about the

* *Advance to Barbarism*. By F. J. P. Veale. C. C. Nelson, Appleton, Wisconsin. $3.50.

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power of British propaganda, because they happen to coincide. A consequence of such inaccuracies and oddities of opinion is that when Mr. Veale makes large generalisations, such as the very interesting one that the institution of war-prisoner status followed the institution of slavery, the reader can hardly feel confident that the proposition is based on adequate study. When, later on, he asserts that the irresponsible conduct of Kaiser Wilhelm was a negligible cause of the First World War, compared to "the personal antipathy of Edward VII to Germans generally and to the Kaiser in particular, and Edward's secret intrigues with the French," with no explanation of what authorities he relies on for the statement, or what intrigues he refers to, the reader can see clearly what sort of book this is: not history but an endeavour to get some feeling off the writer's chest.

There are many denunciations of the hateful art of propaganda which Mr. Veale taunts with Mr. Huxley's phrase "emotional engineering" (and unhappily for the reader with imitations of Mr. Huxley's repetitiveness of phrase), but *Advance to Barbarism* is as distorted by emotion as any wartime production of any Ministry of Information or Enlightenment. Like much propaganda it fails in its object by attempting too much. The great charges against the Nuremberg trials, that they lacked authority in an accepted meaning of the term, that the moral authority of the Allies was too weakened by their own offences in war and peace to allow them to assume responsibility for such high-handed justice, that it was infamous to put on trial the same men from whom the surrender of a great state had been accepted, and that some of the sentences were evidently dictated by political considerations—these terrible and hardly answerable accusations against us are lost in this book because the author has asked the reader to do the impossible: to accept the Nazi case to the exclusion of all others.

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MR. VEALE is not a Nazi. He says so himself quite plainly. The book has a preface in which the author dwells on the singular importance of what he has written, the high praise it has merited from eminent persons, its extraordinary fairness, its undeserved neglect by reviewers, and in the course of this preamble he asserts that he knows about the atrocities of the Nazis, adding that "as a libertarian and a friend of peace" he has "always viewed them with horror." He goes on to say that so much has been written about these acts of barbarism that he feels that he need not dwell on them further in this study of barbarism. He is as good as his word, and no more is heard about Nazi atrocities for more than two hundred and twenty pages, and after that not much. The name of Kaltenbrunner, who faced the most ghastly of all the charges preferred at Nuremberg, is nowhere to be found in this book on Nuremberg. Any reader who is so rash as not to read the preface (as every reader does with some book at some time in his life), could suspect the author of artful suppression, for it is certain that unmention of the worst deeds of Nazism does remarkably facilitate what seems to be one purpose of Mr. Veale's book: namely to lay the chief blame for the relapse into barbarism on his British compatriots. The task is not easy, and Mr. Veale shows ingenuity in producing a supporting argument of any kind. It is an argument which may surprise many people, and ought to be looked at.

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In 1944 Mr. J. M. Spaight, a former high-level official in the Air Ministry, published a brief and able book called *Bombing Vindicated* in which for the first time, so far as I know, the strategic character of the R.A.F., as opposed to the tactical character of other air forces, was authoritatively explained to general readers. Mr. Spaight made an important disclosure; that on May 11th, 1940, the R.A.F. undertook the first strategic raid of the war when eighteen Whitley bombers attacked railway communications behind the German armies then advancing across Flanders. In a passage (which Mr. Veale misrepresents) Mr. Spaight pointed out that this raid was radically different from the German raids on Rotterdam and Warsaw, since these, taking place in battle areas, were tactical. There was a political risk in the raid since, being conducted outside a battle area, it could give Hitler an excuse to conduct terror-bombing on Great Britain, and Mr. Spaight considers that the High Command decision to ignore that risk was "splendid." I agree with Mr. Spaight. Mr. Veale does not, and he indulges (with his unhappy trick of reiteration) in some ponderous sarcasm at Mr. Spaight's expense. He seems to experience no difficulty in swallowing Hitler's excuse respectfully, and he implies that without this raid there would have been no terror-bombing in the course of the Second World War. "Without realising it," he says of the Whitley crews concerned, "they were turning a major page of history. *Their flight marked the end of an epoch which had lasted for two and a half centuries.*" The epoch is that of civilised warfare. Readers may find it hard to believe that the italics are Mr. Veale's, but they are.

This argument, already strengthened by a hundred and twenty-three pages of silence on Nazi barbarism, is yet more strengthened by the author's reticence on the political treachery of the Rotterdam attack, and by his sparing us all allusion to Nazi refugee tactics. He does not mention Guernica. Returning frequently to the Whitley raid he further suggests that the bombers did no military damage and threw their bombs out carelessly over populated areas. As with his strictures on Edward VII, he gives no authority for the accusation. It is an unamiable trait of this libertarian and friend of peace that he is so ready to attribute bad motives and actions to those who disagree with him. He insists that the trials of Goering and Mannstein were primarily due to British professional spite. A result of his cantankerousness is that when he has got some real evidence on which to ground his anti-British bias, as with the atrocious raid on Dresden in 1945, he fails to make his effect, as he has used up so much of his indignation on what is palpable nonsense. He has cried "Wolf" against his country too often.

THE oddest passage in the book is the account of what happened in the summer of 1940. The reader has already been stimulated by Mr. Veale's warm words in tribute to the Pax Bismarckica to hail a similar European opportunity, when the Pax Hitlerica, that is to say, was proposed after the fall of France. Mr. Veale takes the British determination to fight on very badly. He mourns the necessity thus imposed on Nazi Germany of following in the terrible path of barbarism opened by British crime on May 11th. He charges Britain and the U.S.A. with having financed violent patriotic resistance movements, and so having disrupted what he supposes to have been the pleasant relations existing after the 1940 crash between the German army and the conquered peoples. He does seem genuinely unaware that nationalism came into being before S.O.E. He thinks it was "sulky" of Sir Winston and his countrymen to have ignored Hitler's 1940 peace offer. Of course if you forget all that Nazism meant in the world, except for the gallantry of certain German soldiers, then Sir Winston's behaviour in 1940 does seem rather crotchety and narrow. That is the view Mr. Veale tries to impose on his readers. He protests at the end of the book that he fears a re-crudescence of a Hitler myth. He has certainly shown, unwittingly we must suppose, a way to promote the myth (especially among preface-skippers): by discussing Nuremberg in detail while omitting mention of all those things which angered the organisers into their act of unwisdom.

The danger of this book is that by associating "Anti-Nurembergism" with grotesque notions and theories it may delay the formation of a just general opinion. One may hope that in spite of the rash support of so much absurdity given by Captain Liddell Hart, Lord Hankey, and the late Dean Inge, the fantastical partiality of the writing will deprive Mr. Veale's book of any influence either way, and that it will be

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treated as a curiosity and nothing else. It ought to be left out of the war-trial argument. The answer to unwise enthusiasm such as that of Nuremberg is not to be found in renegade polemic but in the wisdom which comes of authentic breadth of view. In December 1815 the Duke of Broglie, a sincere anti-Bonapartist, recorded the only vote of "Not Guilty" in the parliamentary verdict on Marshal Ney. He explained his action in these memorable words: "*Il est d'ailleurs des évènements qui, par leur nature et par leur portée, dépassent la justice humaine, tout en restant très coupables devant Dieu et devant les hommes.*"

There is nothing like that in Mr. Veale's book.

Christopher Sykes

ORWELL'S BAD GOOD BOOK

GEORGE ORWELL never was the novelist of the 1930's he had hoped to become. It was his critical essays and political reportage which, towards the end of that decade, gave him something of a literary name. The earlier novels, products of years of painful work after his return from Burma in 1927, brought a few discerning reviews, but neither a major reputation nor a living. At the time his third novel, *Keep the Aspidistra Flying*,* appeared in 1936, he was living in a dole-ridden London, supplementing his scanty literary earnings by work as a schoolmaster and bookshop assistant. His setbacks had been enough to feed an obsessive sense of failure, and he was plainly riven by anger. *Keep the Aspidistra Flying*, which is his most closely autobiographical novel, reflects this anger with a savage directness.

Orwell himself once coined the term, "good bad books," for books which have no great literary pretentions and yet remain readable while others of their kind vanish. *Keep the Aspidistra Flying* is in this sense a "bad good book," and its defects spring plainly from the fact that Orwell produced it partly as a literary work, but partly also as a vehicle for his favourite pastime of belabouring himself, on this occasion in the form of his fictional "hero," Gordon Comstock. In this struggle there was no quarter.

"Gordon Comstock was a pretty bloody name, but then Gordon came from a pretty bloody family"—lower upper-middle class, of course, which was the stratum where Orwell had decided hell was located. Mirroring Orwell's own situation at the time, Gordon is depicted as an ill-paid bookshop assistant, "almost thirty and already moth-eaten," trying unsuccessfully to write. It is characteristic of Orwell that he makes Gordon's plight worse than his own actually was. Orwell had been to Eton, not to Gordon's "third-rate schools," and even at that time he was not without literary connections, such as Richard Rees or Cyril Connolly. Yet he exclaims in rage—*via* Gordon—that if you haven't been to Cambridge you might as well consider yourself doomed in English literature, and that "today in England you can no more be cultured without money than you can join the Cavalry Club."

Gordon Comstock is thus a whipping boy, and Orwell drives him with a nagging relentlessness through the round of a humourless, unsuccessful writer who could be thrown clean off his balance by a rejection slip, and into wild rage by a fancied social slight. Previously, Gordon had been a success as a smart copywriter in the New Albion Publicity Company, but for some reason confusedly linked with his despised social origins had decided to defy the all-powerful "money-god," and had thrown up his career. He had then taken a two pounds a week job in a bookshop, and had tried to write. But this experiment brought no success. For months Gordon had done nothing; for months he had made no progress with the manuscript of his long poem, "London Pleasures," whose pages "were like poor hacked cancer patients after twenty operations." It is at this point of self-doubt that Orwell picks up his unattractive hero, and his story.

There are really only two other characters in the book. There is Gordon's friend and benefactor Ravelston, made of different clay,

* *Keep the Aspidistra Flying*. By GEORGE ORWELL. Secker and Warburg. 12s. 6d.

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because he is rich and thus possesses "a wide lean-shouldered body and the typical lounging grace of the upper-class youth"; he has a languid, fur-wrapt mistress who emphasises that the working classes smell. And there is Gordon's fiancée Rosemary, a young woman of his own age and the typical Orwell heroine whose role it is to provide—or fail to provide—the lonely hero with the solace he needs. At the climax of the book Orwell introduces an eccentric seduction scene in which Rosemary undresses in the middle of the wintry English countryside. Gordon is aware only of the eightpence left in his pocket. Rosemary repulses him because he refuses to take precautions, and Gordon cries bitterly, "Money again, you see!" Presumably aimed at the tragi-comic, the scene sags into the grotesque.

Later, after a drunken spree from which Gordon awakes in a police cell with his job lost, Orwell pushes him one stage deeper in perdition, to an abject job and filthy bug-ridden bedroom in a south London slum. And here, as Gordon touches bottom, Orwell suddenly relents. Rosemary has become pregnant—the life force intervenes! Gordon Comstock, as a gentleman from the lower upper-middle class, naturally agrees that he must marry her. But marriage implies a respectable job—in fact, nothing less than Gordon's return to the New Albion Publicity Company. And here Orwell not only lets Gordon surrender, but to do so optimistically, since his two years' rebellion against the money-god had brought only emptiness and futility. The book closes with Gordon and Rosemary in their new home, complete with aspidistra, thrilled by the thought of the baby.

It is not hard to show that *Keep the Aspidistra Flying* is in many ways a bad good book. Psychological error lies at its very core. Orwell, it seems, never really saw that his profound unhappiness at school was not so much *caused* by the fact that he had less money than his fellows as it was *focussed* on this fact. This confusion runs through *Keep the Aspidistra Flying*, as Orwell-Gordon rails obsessedly against money. In addition, the novel is often raw and immature. Its situations and dialogue are at times novelettish, its humour stilted and elementary. Mr. Wyndham Lewis in his quite sympathetic study of Orwell has even gone so far as to say that the silliness of the book cannot be conveyed without large quotations, as of Gordon's moralising speeches during the *al fresco* love scene. This is exaggerated, but one can see the point.

And yet, when all this is admitted, *Keep the Aspidistra Flying* retains its interest. It is undeniably an Orwell book. What stands out so surprisingly, for example, is its resemblance to *1984*. The more one looks at it, the more the London of the 1930's which Orwell sketches in *Keep the Aspidistra Flying* seems to be made of the same backcloth he later used in *1984*. Posters are diabolically prominent in both books. Gordon is perpetually enraged by the yard-wide, simpering face of "Corner Table," i.e. a restaurant customer advertising a beverage, just as, in *1984*, Winston Smith is tormented by the threatening countenance of Big Brother. Gordon and Winston—how alike they are! Already Gordon speaks with physical self-distaste of being a moth-eaten thirty, and of having only so and so many teeth, just as Winston speaks of being forty, and having still fewer teeth. Gordon is a seedy member of the lower upper-middle class, cut off from the rich, envying the allegedly carefree workers. Winston belongs to the harassed ranks of the Outer Party, by now cut off by totalitarian law from contact with the members of the powerful Inner Party, or from the mass of the happy, illiterate "proles."

The resemblances grow the more one looks at the two books. Gordon Comstock, sitting in his dingy bed-sitting room while working on the manuscript which symbolises his revolt against money-society, wants to brew his tea illicitly. "It was queer how furtively you had to live in Mrs. Wisbeach's house. You had the feeling she was always watching you; and indeed she was given to tip-toeing up and down stairs at all hours, in hope of catching the lodgers." In *1984* Orwell makes it an actual Party crime that Winston should sit secretly in his room and write; and the eyes of Mrs. Wisbeach have become those of the Thought Police and the Telescreen. Gordon works in the New Albion Publicity Company ("They had their cynical code worked out. The public are swine; advertising is the rattling of a stick inside a swill bucket"); in *1984*, this has developed into the Ministry of Truth.

The resemblance extends to the other characters. Gordon Comstock has Ravelston,

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his upper-class friend who tries to wean him from senseless revolt. O'Brien, the Inner Party member who in *1984* performs a similar service for Winston Smith, is only Ravelston turned demonic. And the heroines: Gordon first meets his Rosemary, who is dark, pretty, and athletic, as she gives him special glances in the corridor of the New Albion. It is in the corridor of the Ministry of Truth that Winston encounters his Julia who is also dark-haired, athletic, and glances at him significantly. Both books end on the same striking note of surrender: Gordon Comstock's to advertising, service of the "money-god," and married respectability; Winston Smith's to the totalitarian Party and Big Brother, with the difference that in the later book the nightmare carries on to the end.

A comparison of the two books thus shows how early Orwell has developed his fixed, narrow vision of the world around him, though in the earlier book the expression of this vision was still confused. It is interesting that, in *Keep the Aspidistra Flying*, Orwell in the end reprieved his *Doppelgänger*: when about to settle down as a respectable married citizen, Gordon Comstock is allowed to throw the tattered manuscript of "London Pleasures" down a drain—and to feel only relief! But for Orwell himself there was no reprieve. A year later, in writing his next book, *The Road to Wigan Pier*, he begins an eighty-page autobiographical sketch with the words: "I was born into what you might describe as the lower upper-middle class. . . ." and goes on, "That was what as children we were taught—the lower classes smell!" But, nevertheless, by this time he had progressed further. *Wigan Pier* also contained some memorable descriptions of the life of unemployed English coalminers. And after that, his road led him to the civil war in Spain, where in totalitarianism he met an enemy worthier of his gifts than the English lower upper-middle class.

T. R. Fyvel

INDIAN COMMUNISM

SINCE the victory of Mao in China, India has become one of the two main targets of Communism in Asia. The author of the present work,* a former leader of the Indian socialist movement, not only knows his own country but has a firm grasp of international Communism in theory and practice. His history of the Indian Party is as much analytical as descriptive, and his final chapter of thirty pages discusses Communist prospects in wider terms. Mr. Masani cannot hope to escape the pontifical hostility of the perfectionists and the dogmatistic specialists, for this is the lot of all who embark on his theme. But those who merely wish to know and understand a little more about Asian affairs would do well to consult his book.

Nominally founded in 1924, the Communist Party of India was for its first ten years an insignificant sect, organised with the help of British Communists and of the Comintern. In the 1930's it began to make some headway among young intellectuals by anti-fascist and popular front slogans. Such sympathy as it won was mostly lost when, between 1941 and 1945, in its desire to help the Soviet Union, it supported the British war effort. A new stage in its history opened in 1948, when it embarked on a course of violence and insurrection. This was the period of peasant riots in the Madras and Hyderabad provinces, and unsuccessful attempts at revolutionary strikes, culminating in the fiasco of March 1949, when the railway men failed to come out. Ranadive, the party's leader in this stage, even presumed to accuse Mao of Titoist heresies. This brought a formal rebuke from the Cominform journal in January 1950, and his replacement as Secretary of the Party five months later. During 1950 the Party was in some confusion, but by mid-1951, when A. K. Ghosh became Secretary, a third stage had been reached.

* *Communism in India*. By M. R. MASANI. Derek Verschoyle, London, and Institute of Pacific Relations, New York. 18s.

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Essentially it amounted to a rehash of the Popular Front, with room for manœuvre in several directions. The Party reaffirmed its revolutionary nature, and stressed that, at the right time and in the right place, both peasant partisan warfare, of the Chinese type, and mass action by the workers in the cities, as in Russia up to 1917 or in parts of Western Europe between the world wars, could usefully be applied in India. Although bitterly hostile to the Congress Party, the Indian Communists were to make all possible use of anti-American trends in the foreign policy of Pandit Nehru. It seems in fact probable that the increasing moderation of Communist activities from 1950 onwards, the much less frequent use of violence, were in large part a consequence of the Korean war, which had demonstrated to Moscow that Nehru was not in fact a puppet of British imperialism, but that on the contrary his neutralism could be exploited by the "Peace Camp."

The third Congress of the Communist Party of India, held from December 27th, 1953, to January 3rd, 1954, showed—if the documents quoted by Mr. Masani are authentic*—that confusion had by no means been eliminated from the party's ranks. The official thesis was that American imperialism was the main enemy, and that the Party's main task was to assist the "Peace Camp" in its struggle against America. This doctrine must imply a rather careful treatment of Nehru and of Britain, for the former was often in conflict with American policy, while the latter's attitude was sufficiently distinct from the American for Moscow to hope that wedges could be inserted. But this policy was distasteful to some of the old militants. To them the British, not the Americans, were the imperialist enemy; confiscation of all British investments was a first-class rabble-rousing slogan; and Nehru and his Congress Party must be fought tooth and nail. It is curious to learn that the cause of Anglo-Indian cooperation (within the "Peace Camp," of course, but making use when possible of Nehru and even the rulers of "capitalist" Britain) was upheld at the Party Congress by none other than Harry Pollitt.

It is clear that in the past the British Communist leaders, and especially R. Palme Dutt, have played an important part in the relations between the Indian party and Moscow. Mr. Masani raises, though the inadequate evidence does not permit him to answer, the question whether the Russo-British influence is now likely to be replaced by Chinese. The question is probably academic today, as there are no grounds for doubting that Soviet-Chinese cooperation is working well. Moscow is glad that the Indian comrades are using the prestige of China to make converts among the sentimental Pan-Asian element in the Indian intelligentsia. The Indian Party's "Tactical Line," brought from Moscow in 1951, impresses the non-Communist reader as an extremely able and realistic document, which considers the relevance of Chinese experience to Indian conditions in terms not of dogma but of fact. Nevertheless, in the longer term, Russo-Chinese rivalry for control of the Indian party may prove a serious factor.

MR. MASANI believes that the religious beliefs of the people of India, and the immense influence of Gandhi, are powerful forces against Communism. The most effective opponents of the Communists among the political parties are, in his view, the Socialists. He also attaches importance to the government's Five Year Plan and to the movement of Vinobha Bhave for the voluntary distribution of land among the peasants. But other powerful forces, he argues, favour the Communists. One is the poverty of the masses, which is maintained or increased by the growth of population. But, he points out, it is not among the masses that the Communists recruit their chief support. They are essentially a party of the intelligentsia. Indignation at the poverty of the masses is one of the reasons why a strong minority among Indian intellectuals look to Communism. Ambition also plays a part. The strength of the two great Communist empires that are India's northern neighbours inspires a mixture of admiration and horror. Perhaps most important of all, the myth of the miraculous Stalinist short-cut to earthly paradise possesses minds which, no longer satisfied by

* The proceedings of the Party Congress were not open to the public. The text of several reports and decisions of the Congress have been published by the Democratic Research Service, Bombay, under the title *Communist Conspiracy in India*. The Communists at first denounced them as forgeries, but when challenged to take legal action, lapsed into silence. The Indian press, after some initial scepticism, now accepts them as authentic.

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traditional religion, seek some ready-made doctrine that will explain everything.

Mr. Masani's emphasis on the intelligentsia is absolutely convincing. In this respect Indian society has much in common with the pre-revolutionary societies of the only three countries in which Communists have ever seized power by their own efforts—Russia, Yugoslavia, and China. All three also suffered from peasant poverty and rural overpopulation, which are another basic weakness of Indian society today. There are, however, important differences. In Russia the bureaucracy was not only reactionary and despotic, but also weak and irresolute. The bad social conscience of the Russian intellectuals extended to the government officials, especially to those in the highest ranks. In India, if the intellectual has some of the traits of his Russian predecessor, the bureaucrat, the soldier, and the judge seem to be made of stouter stuff. Integrity, respect for the law, and love of freedom are probably more deeply rooted in the civil service and judiciary of India than they were in those of Imperial Russia. Even Sardar Panikkar, no friend of Western imperialism and no enemy of the new masters of Peking, speaks with warmth of "the imposing and truly magnificent legal structure" erected by British rule.* And if the structure and its traditions are still strong, the Indians as well as the British deserve credit. With the bureaucracy of Kuomintang China the contrast is of course still greater. A further basic difference between Indian and Chinese society concerns the role of religion. The rapid success of the Chinese Communists among the peasants from 1927 onwards was in great measure due to the weak hold of religion. There is clearly no parallel for this in India.

But the decisive factor for Communist victory or defeat, as Mr. Masani well knows, and as the history of Russia, China, and Yugoslavia abundantly proves, is the strength of the state machine. It is tempting to compare the Indian Congress Party with the Chinese Kuomintang. It can be argued that the leadership of both movements was recruited from rather similar social groups. But this is less revealing than the Marxists or quasi-Marxists imagine. The ideas of the two parties have certainly been very different. The Indian mixture of Gandhism and liberalism has little in common with either the slogans of Sun Yat-sen or the authoritarianism of Chiang Kai-shek. But the fate of the Kuomintang cannot be explained in terms either of its social composition or of its ideology. The most important fact about it is that it was almost permanently at war, and so never had the opportunity to establish its own state machine. It never, even from 1928 to 1931, had a period of peace and security in which it could create a system of public order, to ensure obedience to its authority throughout the country. The Japanese invasion of Manchuria finally deprived it of the chance.

The Russian, Yugoslav, and Chinese Communists triumphed only after the state machines of their respective enemies had been smashed by foreign invaders. In India the state machine has worked comparatively well since 1947. The government's orders are obeyed throughout the country. The Communists' attempts to create "Yenans" have failed. But it would be dogmatic to assert that only war and invasion can decisively weaken a state machine. Mr. Masani mentions two dangers that may prove

* *Asia and Western Dominance*, p. 497.

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serious. One is the propaganda, strongly supported by the Communists but not only by them, for the creation of linguistic states in the Indian Federation. A balkanisation of India could do deadly damage. The other danger, less specific but perhaps more insidious, is the unwillingness of many Indian intellectuals and politicians, and indeed of Nehru himself, to recognise the nature of Stalinist totalitarianism. In the strict field of foreign policy, there may be much to be said for Indian neutralism. India is a country of 350 millions, a Great Power which must put its own national interests first. But there is nothing whatever to be said for regarding Stalinists and Maoists as good democrats, with the right aims, with whom the people of India could enjoy a happy friendship if only they would learn to be a little less impatient and rude. Surely the time is past when the former misdeeds of British imperialists, whether real or alleged, can be held by intelligent persons to justify a refusal to see totalitarianism as it is, and to tell the people the truth. In general the outlook for India is far from gloomy, and the Communist threat is not dangerous in the near future. But Mr. Masani is certainly right to reject complacency and to look ahead.

Hugh Seton-Watson

THE BANYAN TREE

JUST about half way through the 18th century, some Englishmen made a discovery: that plain prose narrative, without allegorical content, could be—no less than blank verse drama or epic or the essay in heroic couplets—a medium for the projection of a "view of life." Little did they know what they had started! Just as Newton, clasping his brass spheres and foot-rule, may be thought to look down from his presumably polyhedral heaven with appalled God-fearing eyes upon the H-bomb, bakelite tea-cups, and television drama of which he cannot deny at least the part-paternity, so too from their more ramshackle Elysium these pioneers of the novel upon the mingled jungle and suburbia of the contemporary literary scene. Does the shade of Richardson smile upon the shade of Firbank, or that of Fielding upon Miss Elizabeth Jenkins? With all allowances to the charity of ghosts, I doubt it. For the novel's triumph or disaster (as one cares to look at it) was that it became, not merely a possible, but Europe's dominant literary form; and the trouble of a dominant form is that it attracts into itself all those waifs and strays whose authors were not men enough to give them the different, non-dominant, forms that they really demanded. So we have political tracts and sociological tracts and psychological tracts, popular historical or geographical treatises, biography, autobiography, or comparative ethnology, the propagation of the faith or exercises in inductive logic, all masquerading as "novels" and attached, sometimes desperately, sometimes perfunctorily, to a poor little thread of "narrative," a sort of "vestigial tale" that is seldom ornamental and must always be an incumbrance. So too the unfortunate novel-reviewer may find himself confronted with a pile of heterogeneous objects having little in common beyond the form that each usurps.

Such considerations tempt many people today to regard the novel as something of an old oak on its last roots, the good core ("it must entertain, it must tell a story") long since burnt out and hollow, the only remaining activity a certain amount of bristling and twiggery about the boles of snapped-off branches; some few suckers; a proliferation of oak-apples and fly-galls, and an unconscionable weight of ivy. But perhaps this is to be too insular. My own vote goes not to the oak but to the banyan—which, as botanical and other readers will recall, lets fall from the tips of its spreading branches long pendulous twigs that, on reaching the ground, take root there and become eventually the trunks of new and revigorated trees; thus creating in the course of centuries a complete grove which would be little affected by the loss of its founder.

NEVERTHELESS Fielding's banyan has by now succeeded in dropping twig-roots into some pretty unlikely places; and none unlikelier (at any rate from Fielding's point of view) than the township of Abeokuta in Nigeria, birthplace of Mr. Amos Tutuola. Mr. Tutuola's first novel, *The Palm-Wine Drinkard*, enjoyed considerable success when it was first published two years ago in this country, and now he has

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followed it up with *My Life in the Bush of Ghosts.* * Like its predecessor, this is a breathless riot of African imagination with all the inconsequence and lack of ordering of a dream—a dream, moreover, in which one's analyst would be quite indecently interested. Indeed, *My Life in the Bush of Ghosts* provides raw material for shelf-fulls of ethnology, mythology, psychology, and every other busybody-ology, though it should be clearly understood that Mr. Tutuola is no mere recorder of local beliefs but a maker of brand-new myths and creative artist in his own right. The book is written moreover in a charming and forceful "pidgin" in perfect tune with the subject-matter; indeed it is probably only this exotic and childlike English that could ever persuade the reader to lend an ear to these tallest of tall dark tales.

I found this book fascinating throughout: I also found it in places, owing to its author's frequent reluctance or inability to develop the themes with which his fertile inspiration had presented him, exasperating. But it is undoubtedly a book to commend, for it has a strange stimulating and outlandish flavour entirely peculiar to itself and that cannot be found elsewhere (apart from in *The Palm-Wine Drinkard*) in any other book in English in the whole wide world.

AND whose little banyan is the detective story? If it is Poe's, if we can lay this at his door as well as all the sadder excesses of French 19th century poetry, he has certainly as much to answer for as his two illustrious compatriots, Henry James and Mr. Eliot, put together. No doubt the thesis has already been written: how to the hard core ("it must entertain, it must tell a story") the pioneers added two new attractions, the intellectual one of stimulating the reader's brain by inviting him to induce, to solve problems, and the emotional one of inviting him to vicarious fear or horror, of "giving him a thrill"; how interest next began to shift from the interplay of character, up till then a staple ingredient, to these new elements (the hard core, as ever, beginning to die away), leading us to the classical detective story of the Sherlock Holmes type, in which the hair is raised and the wits sharpened in roughly equal proportion—cobras, leprosy, precipices, steam-hammers and giant sting-rays, and the great grey brain ratiocinating over all; how, finally, these two elements themselves came in the fulness of time to diverge, so that nowadays we are faced with an almost complete dichotomy—extended induction-exercises with a minimum of violence on the one hand, and on the other thrill-bundles which no longer make even a pretence of posing the reader intellectual problems.

Mr. Ian Fleming's *Live and Let Die* * belongs very firmly to this second category. The trouble here is that the capacity of the spine to be chilled grows decidedly duller with each fresh stimulation. "Shelley fainted at his own notion of a woman with an eye in each breast; today we are made of sterner stuff." Mr. Fleming's brew is the old half-pint of blood topped up with sex. To whip the flagging spine he produces various complicated pieces of apparatus, voodoo and man-eating fish mostly. He does even succeed in genuinely shocking at one point; but this is only because he has broken one of the absolutely sacred literary laws of his medium—for he allows those fish to get at his detective's faithful assistant, relieving him of an arm, a leg, and all sorts of *bonnes bouches passim.* Not at all cricket, Mr. Fleming. The author then tries to cover up one literary crime with another: for he drops this unfortunately mutilated character, up to now a protagonist, from the remainder of the book entirely. We do not want ex-faithful-assistants about the place on crutches: the thriller deals in cruelty, not pity.

It will be gathered that *Live and Let Die* did not please me. Mocking was indeed the gentler course: I could find a harder word for work that appeals, I think, to a baser human instinct than the smudgy postcards hawked at the more central London tube-stations. It is with a rather wry amusement therefore that I note what my contemporaries apparently have to say of Mr. Fleming's previous essay in this vein: "Both exciting and extremely civilised" (The T...s L.....y S.....t); "Thriller for an intelligent audience" (The N.w S.....n). Intelligence? Civilisation? Mr. Tutuola, have you a vacancy for me in that Bush of Ghosts?

* *My Life in the Bush of Ghosts.* By AMOS TUTUOLA. Faber and Faber. 12s. 6d.

* *Live and Let Die.* By IAN FLEMING. Jonathan Cape. 10s. 6d.

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MR. DAVID KARP'S *One* * is a political tract written in the form of a novel because people read novels and do not read political tracts, and yet the whole point of a tract of any sort is that it should be read by as many people as possible. . . . It is extremely like *1984*. Indeed it is difficult to escape the conviction that *One* is purely derivative; Mr. Karp seems to have read *1984*, to have exclaimed at certain points, "Oh no, I wouldn't have done it *that* way!", and to have settled down cheerfully to go right where Orwell went wrong. Such methods may or may not lead to improvements in doctrine, but they are hardly likely to lead to improvements in art. As a literary work *One*, in fact, seems to have reproduced, and exaggerated, Orwell's faults while avoiding his virtues. Characterisation, for instance, already thin in Orwell, is here scarcely attempted: both hero-victim and his inquisitors are the merest pawns—and this is a peculiarly serious fault in the present case, for the hero, Burden, is supposed to represent the indestructible powers of human individuality and yet we are unable to believe in his own individuality at all. On the other hand Orwell's brilliant political inventions (the concept of "double-think," for instance) have no counter-part in *One*. Nor have his hard clear thinking, and the hard clear writing that derived from it. Mr. Karp's book abounds in sentences, and thoughts, of the quality of this one:

> Why had she chosen him? He was cynical enough to know that it is always the woman who chooses the man for a love object, so he knew that she had chosen him. But why?

It is not even a half-truth, and yet it is stated flatly as an axiom; and it is not "cynical" to possess a knowledge.

Our grandchildren may well read *1984*, as we read Swift's *Modest Proposal*; they will not read *One*, and it will be for reasons of this sort. Nevertheless it is only fair to say that this book has been very highly praised in many circles. This may however be due rather to the impeccability of its democratic and individualist sentiments.

AND now back to the old solid core. Miss Elizabeth Jenkins' *The Tortoise and The Hare* † has been ushered in with such a parade of puffs and trumpets, such awardings of Books of the Week, Year, Month and (for all I know) Century, that any cream-puffs or -trumpets I care to toss in the wake of the procession will probably, and perhaps rightly, be interpreted as mere gutter-snipe action. After all, what more could human restlessness desire? Here, the blurb tells us, are "incisive characterisation"; "true refinement"; "tenderness, one might say an exquisiteness." More, if we care to open the book to test these claims we find, perhaps with a sneaking sense of surprise, that they seem to be justified—provided we are not too captious about the precise nature of "true" refinement. What else? "Silvery grace," the blurb says. Let's look inside again! Yes, that's all right, plenty of silvery grace too, bit on every page, couldn't possibly miss it. What else? Well, Miss Jenkins has contrived what all novelists dream of and so few achieve, a practically original plot, a full résumé of which may be found on the dust-jacket or in any other review of the book than this one. If, indeed, it were possible (as I am sure it is in America) to take a degree in novel-writing, Miss Jenkins would be a first-class honours graduate, loaded with alphas and academica and platinum medals in Plot, Characterisation, Style, Description, and Atmosphere. No wonder the book-boys love her!

And I? Remain restless; and think about the closing chapters of *Persuasion* and how, if all went wrong and in the end Anne Elliott did not come home into the arms of Captain Wentworth, then it would be a dark world that I for one shouldn't much care to continue to live in. Miss Jenkins' characters are "well done," but they are not (if I may use this desperately unfashionable word) *noble*, and the lot of them may slit each other's throats for me, and the world keep its colour. All the great novels are concerned with some sort of nobility of character, and it is the mark of a great novelist to create it. But *The Tortoise and the Hare* is merely a "housemaid's novel" cultured up a little for the benefit of the classes that no longer keep housemaids.

I HAVE kept to the end a very remarkable novel indeed. It is called *The Hussar on the Roof* * and is by the Provençal writer Jean Giono. The scene, and indeed one might say the

* *One*. By DAVID KARP. Gollancz. 12s. 6d.

† *The Tortoise and the Hare*. By ELIZABETH JENKINS. Gollancz. 12s. 6d.

* *The Hussar on the Roof*. By JEAN GIONO. Museum Press. 15s.

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subject, is the devastating cholera epidemic of 1838 and its effects—the horrifying physical disorders of the individual, the spiritual disorders of those who, seated amongst their families at table, might expect to see all wiped out in a few minutes before their very eyes, the social disorders that turned all Provence into a shambles of pyres and quicklime, deserted towns, self-governing communes, panic-stricken lynchers, bandits, barred roads, and strangers shot on sight. One might expect such a book to be sensationalist, tedious, or merely disgusting: *The Hussar on the Roof* is anything but. First, it is extremely beautifully written (and the beauty comes through in Mr. Jonathan Griffin's excellent translation). The book is long, the movement is lovingly slow, the descriptive passages may go on for pages; and yet I found myself reading every word, and most twice—of how many authors can one say it? M. Giono has such a feeling for the exact, the blindly illuminating, the true poetic image, that a medically detailed account of a young woman in the appalling agonies of "lightning cholera," or of a flock of crows pecking out the eyes of a dead farmer, becomes as absolutely and precisely beautiful to the eye and ear as a thunderstorm or a chestnut forest.

> The sickness, which devoured the flesh like lightning, left the colour of the eye intact, visible through the opening. With some young women, of whom nothing remained but a pallid skin mottled underneath by patches of corrupted blood, there was nothing left but long curved eye-lashes leaning over a blue pool, an emerald, a topaz of the purest water. The cheeks were violet and the lips black, tight shut but always letting through the tip of a tongue, poppy-red, startling, nauseatingly obscene, clashing violently with the eye half-open showing its colour; to which, when one was obliged to look at one of these faces, one returned, in spite of the contemptuous, proud, haughty quality of this still gaze, seemingly fixed on distant horizons, in a body lying in the mud and sometimes indeed already verminous and rotted.

It is not horrible because it is seen with a mind that is (since I am using unfashionable words) clean and pure: there is something antiseptic and antihysterical about precise description. Moreover these deaths and horrors are not merely described accurately, they are also made familiar and bearable by repetition. For M. Giono's method is accumulative. Not one but dozens of deaths are described, all basically similar yet each in its variations and surprises unique and unrepeatable. The effect is often dreamlike, and yet always (if one may use the term) "lifelike." It is a sort of *passacaglia* of death in which the great ground-theme perpetually becomes more known, more endurable, though no less terrible.

Secondly comes that cleanness and purity that I have just mentioned. M. Giono is not remotely one of those whose "objectivity" arises out of a thorough ignorance of the distinctions between good and evil; on the contrary, *The Hussar on the Roof* is the product of a moral, steady, and believing mind. Because he is clean he can touch the cholera without fear of contagion. This applies with equal strength to his hero Angelo, whose picaresque adventures form the structural basis of the book. Angelo is young, idealistic, aristocratic, quick-tempered, extremely proud and humble, absolutely unsentimental, pure-minded, innocent and (may I say?) noble; he naturally also possesses that quality practically inseparable (whatever the world may think) from these—high intelligence. It will be gathered therefore that he is at something of a remove from the psychotic nobody we are more usually invited to identify ourselves with: he is indeed, as the publishers remark, more of a Stendhalian than a contemporary conception. His adventures form the necessary complement to the slow inweaving natural description, for they are told in terms of pure action, as naked, swift and unreflecting as those of Tom Jones or Joseph Andrews—indeed we are back in a prelapsarian golden morning of story-telling, as if Freud's shadow plucking the apple had never fallen crooked upon the land. Character is dissected, and very acutely dissected, but it is not undermined. It is all very sharp and refreshing. And the close of the book, a wonderfully tender and astringent dying fall, leaves a taste in the mouth like grapefruit in spite of all the horrors that have gone before.

I have nothing but the highest praise for *The Hussar on the Roof*. M. Giono has done for the cholera what Melville did for the whale. The founders peer out of their Elysium and are, I think, for once well pleased.

Hilary Corke

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About our Authors

LEE KOK LIANG, after studying in Melbourne and London, recently returned to his native Malaya. . . . LESLIE A. FIEDLER is Professor of Humanities at Montana State University. . . . JOHN MUGGERIDGE, the son of Malcolm Muggeridge, has just completed a tour of duty in Kenya. . . . RANDALL JARRELL'S novel, *Pictures from an Institution*, was published in the USA a few months ago. . . . SYBILLE BEDFORD is the author of *The Sudden View*, a book on Mexico published by Gollancz in 1953. . . . RAYMOND ARON'S most recent book, *A Century of Total War*, was published last month by Derek Verschoyle. . . . DENIS DE ROUGEMONT, author of *Passion and Society*, *The Devil's Share* and other books, is President of the Executive Committee of the Congress for Cultural Freedom. . . . CHRISTOPHER SYKES' most recent novel was *A Song of a Shirt* published by Derek Verschoyle. Beginning with this issue of ENCOUNTER, Mr. Sykes will contribute a regular monthly review. . . . HILARY CORKE is a poet and critic, and teaches English at Edinburgh University. . . . T. R. FYVEL, who lives in London, contributes frequently to our pages. . . . ANGUS WILSON has just finished his first play, *The Mulberry Bush*, and is now working on a new novel.

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